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An Aggregate of Styles:
Donald Martino's *Fantasies and Impromptus*

Committee:

Elizabeth B. Crist, Supervisor

Gregory Allen, Co-Supervisor

Elliott Antokoletz

Betty Mallard

David Renner

Cheney Crow

An Aggregate of Styles:
Donald Martino's *Fantasies and Impromptus*

by

Jonathan Leonard Ryan Fogg, M.M.; B.M.

Treatise

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Dedication

This treatise is dedicated to my parents,

Robert and Jeanne Fogg,

whose love and support never went unnoticed,

and to Dr. Randall Sulton,

whose guidance as a teacher, a mentor, and a friend has been invaluable.

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Jonathan Leonard Ryan Fogg, D.M.A.

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Supervisors: Elizabeth B. Crist & Gregory Allen

Donald Martino has maintained a consistent and individualistic approach to composition and has established himself as one of the most prominent American twelve-tone composers of his time. In many of his works, he has successfully merged an interest in traditional formal structures with a contemporary harmonic language, balancing a concern for structure with a penchant for the dramatic and expressive. The integration of conventional forms and elements of romanticism with a progressive twelve-tone pitch organization is most evident in his *Fantasies and Impromptus* for solo piano. Within these pieces, he demonstrates his affinity for combining improvisation with structure, virtuosity with expression, and tradition with innovation. By fusing together classical formal structures with elements of romanticism, his unique twelve-tone language takes on a new meaning and becomes more comprehensible. These pieces are not limited to one particular style, but embody many approaches to become an aggregate, a synthesis of many influences and original ideas.

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Introduction

Given the number of compositional trends that have occurred in the past sixty years, contemporary composers face a myriad of choices regarding their own approach. The constant pressure to produce new, innovative works is daunting; some have responded by embracing the ideals of the past while still using modern techniques and idioms. Such is the case with the distinguished American composer, Donald Martino (1931-2005). He has maintained a consistent and individualistic approach to composition and has established himself as one of the most prominent American twelve-tone composers of his time. In many of his works, he has successfully merged an interest in traditional formal structures with a contemporary harmonic language, balancing a concern for structure with a penchant for the dramatic and expressive. The integration of conventional forms and elements of romanticism with a progressive twelve-tone pitch organization is most evident in his *Fantasies and Impromptus* for solo piano, subject of this treatise. Prior to examining this important work, I will offer both a biographical sketch of the composer and an overview of his stylistic approach, so that the analysis of the *Fantasies and Impromptus* may be understood in a broader context.

Biography & Works

Donald James Martino was born on May 16, 1931 in Plainfield, New Jersey. His earliest musical education included lessons on the clarinet, an instrument which would prove to be indispensable to him both as a composer and performer. In fact, Martino

quickly became a virtuoso clarinetist and was skilled with other instruments as well. As he himself explained of his early musical experiences, "When I wasn't practicing the clarinet, saxophone, or oboe, I was playing in bands, orchestras, jazz combos, dance bands, feast bands, polka bands, whatever. I couldn't help but improve!"[1] His earliest compositional attempts can also be traced to his extensive experience in these various ensembles, as some of his first works were arrangements for concert band of clarinet solos he had played.[2]

While he was still a young man playing second clarinet with the Plainfield Symphony, Martino was introduced to Harwood Simmons, a professional clarinetist then teaching at Columbia University. When offered another position at Syracuse University, Simmons decided to take it and to bring Martino along as well. Martino spent his first year at Syracuse (1948) as a clarinet major but was later convinced to switch to composition; he then began to study composition with Ernst Bacon. Bacon—who was, in Martino's words, "a wonderful pianist"[3]—proved to be a significant influence in Martino's development as a composer, particularly in his precision of notation and in his admiration and emulation of composers of the past. Bacon "taught me a little bit about how to put notes on a page in a fairly legible way,"[4] Martino explained, and also "schooled me in the great sonatas of Beethoven and the songs of Schubert."[5] Yet Martino's own compositional style at this time resembled that of neither Beethoven nor

[1] James Boros, "A Conversation with Donald Martino," *Perspectives of New Music* 29, no. 2 (1991): 215.
[2] Donald Martino, interview by Vincent Plush, transcript of tape recording, 5 November 1983, Oral History American Music, Yale University, 20.
[3] Ibid., 29.
[4] Ibid., 8.
[5] Boros, 218.

Schubert. His earlier fascination with jazz and popular music still held strong, so it was logical for him to be drawn to similar sounds and patterns—namely, octatonic scales—in the music of Bartók. Martino explains the connection this way: "I saw in Bartók not just the folksong thing, which by that time didn't interest me much. But what did interest me is all that diminished scale stuff, because that was very jazzy. . . . from 1950 until 1956, all of my music was Bartókian."[6] A notable work from this period of study with Bacon is the *String Quartet No. 2* (1951), which earned Martino a BMI Student Composer award in 1952.

Martino continued his studies as a graduate student at Princeton in 1952, and although he was initially interested in musicology, he promptly returned to composition and started working with Milton Babbitt. Babbitt became perhaps the single greatest influence on Martino's approach to composition, for it is rare to encounter any discussion of Martino without also finding mention of his esteemed mentor. Any assumption that Babbitt coerced Martino to be a twelve-tone or serial composer would, however, be incorrect. In Martino's words, "Babbitt . . . was writing twelve-tone music but he wasn't telling anybody else to do it."[7] Although it is true that Martino would eventually be best known as a serial composer and later become a staunch defender of the twelve-tone system, any attempt to attribute Martino's commitment to serialism exclusively to his study with Milton Babbitt would be imprudent, even if convenient. According to Martino, Babbitt's guidance was invaluable "not because he was a twelve-tone composer,

[6] Martino, interview with Plush, 33.
[7] Gary Frederick Wood, "The Choral Music of Donald Martino" (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1993), 325.

but just because his perceptions about music were so acute. What he had to say about music changed my life."[8]

In Martino's second year at Princeton, Babbitt went on leave; in his absence, Martino continued his studies with Roger Sessions. Perhaps Sessions's greatest contribution was introducing Martino to the music of Schoenberg. After spending an entire year listening to Schoenberg's String Trio in a seminar with Sessions, Martino amusingly recalls, "I finally realized that maybe there was something in Schoenberg."[9] Although it was at this point that Martino began to appreciate the intricacies and possibilities of the twelve-tone approach, he would not begin to utilize the dodecaphony in his own compositions until later. Martino's music at this time began to possess the qualities that are now readily associated with his work, namely "dramatic imagination, expressive warmth, and an infectiously lyrical content."[10] Notable compositions from Martino's years at Princeton include the *String Quartet No. 3* (1953), *Sinfonia* for orchestra (1953), *Quodlibets for Flute* (1954), and *Set for Clarinet* (1954).

Upon leaving Princeton, Martino received two consecutive Fulbright grants to study with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence, Italy from 1954-56. Martino was very fond of Dallapiccola; he once said, "Working with [him] was just like working with my father."[11] Perhaps it was also Dallapiccola who sparked his growing interest (albeit a compulsory one) in the piano. "He [Dallapiccola] forced me to play everything for him at the piano," Martino recalled. "I've never written easy music, and I'm not a pianist, which meant that

[8] Martino, interview with Plush, 43.
[9] Ibid., 40.
[10] David Ewen, *American Composers: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1982), 435.
[11] Martino, interview with Plush, 44.

half the week I'd spend practicing my pieces, so I could stumble through them while he stood behind me, smoking his cigarette."[12] Moreover, it was during Martino's stay in Italy that he began to see the twelve-tone system as "a way of controlling the chromaticisms which had begun to dominate his style."[13] He saw this method not as a profoundly new and different approach, but more as a "logical extension"[14] and a consequence of the "natural evolution"[15] of his current technique. Martino described his thought process as he began to find his own way within this system:

> After writing a few twelve-tone pieces, it became clear to me that there's no problem producing a set or a row. But the real problem is trying to figure out what . . . you do with it next . . . . So that second year in Italy was not so much writing music but just trying to figure out what it was that Milton [Babbitt] knew that we all wanted to know, and that he was guarding so carefully.[16]

Some of Martino's first twelve-tone pieces include *Three Songs* (1955), *Sette Canoni Enigmatici* (1955), *String Trio* (1954), and *Portraits: A Secular Cantata* (1954). A more detailed exploration of the composer's stylistic and aesthetic approach to the twelve-tone system will be presented later.

Upon his return to the United States, Martino taught theory and woodwinds for two years at the Third Street Settlement School in New York. He stopped writing popular music and jazz after 1957, and he ceased to perform publicly in 1959; at that point, his career began to shift exclusively toward teaching and "serious" composition. He has served on the faculty of many prestigious institutions, including Princeton, Yale,

[12] Boros, 221.
[13] Ewen, 436.
[14] Martino, interview with Plush, 52.
[15] Boros, 219.
[16] Martino, interview with Plush, 48.

New England Conservatory, Brandeis University, and Harvard, from which he retired in 1992. Throughout his career, he has garnered many awards for his compositional achievement, including three Guggenheim Fellowships (1967-68, 1973-74, 1982-83), four grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1973, 1976, 1979, 1989), the Naumburg Award (1973), and the Pulitzer Prize for music for *Notturno*, a chamber work (1974). His works stretch across a variety of genres—including music for orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo instruments (clarinet, violin, flute, and cello, among others), solo piano, chorus, voice, and film—and have been commissioned by such organizations as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Koussevitzky Foundation, and the Coolidge Foundation.[17]

Approach to Composition

Although the majority of Martino's music is clearly twelve-tone, affixing any sort of label to the composer is quite problematic, particularly when the composer himself adamantly eschews any such categorization. Certainly his music can be accepted and appreciated apart from any categorical description, but this discussion will explore both the possibilities and the problems that are inherent in generalizing his compositional style.

Martino strongly maintains his individuality regarding his compositional approach, and rightly so, for he has made a conscious effort not to follow compositional fashion. But the composer's reasoning for his individuality lies far beyond what may

[17] A chronological outline of the composer's career and a comprehensive list of works (organized by genre) have been included in the appendix.

appear at first as merely stubborn independence. First, he rejects the function—or at least the motivation—of categorizing trends of modern music. "Most people seem to need ready-made 'isms' to compensate for the fact that they don't understand what they hear," he argues.[18] He acknowledges the existence of such "isms," yet hesitates to be allied very closely to any one of them. Given the stylistic characteristics of his works cited earlier (especially the dramatic and romantic qualities), Martino's music might be related to the "New Romanticism." Yet, in his own words, the composer states that this is "a movement in which I have no interest whatever."[19]

Martino also tries to deny any ties with serialism—a bond which is arguably impossible for him to renounce completely, given his admiration for Milton Babbitt. The composer justifies his refusal to be pigeonholed: "If anyone writes program notes and says I am a Serial or a 12-tone composer, I am infuriated. I don't want to prejudice people with that."[20] Martino clearly recognizes the preconceived notions that are widely held regarding twelve-tone/serial music. "In terms of either audience, critical, or performer acceptance, twelve-tone music has not fared terribly well in this country,"[21] he notes; thus, in disavowing the label, he hopes to avoid prejudicing listeners against his music before it has even been performed. In an interview with James Boros, Martino elaborates on his views toward serialism.

> Maybe I shouldn't so stubbornly deny that I write serial music, but rage is my reaction to the way the term is used popularly. And I'm much annoyed by the condemnation that comes with being a serialist, from those

[18] Boros, 249.
[19] Ibid., 249.
[20] Robert K. Schwarz, "In Contemporary Music, A House Still Divided," *The New York Times*, 3 August 1997.
[21] Martino, interview with Plush, 59.

> self-righteous ignoramuses who think that if you write serial music, the notes are there just pulling you along by the ear. This simple-minded notion of what serial music is, the one that appears in all the history books and is pushed by all seers and sayers, that's what I want to get as far away from as possible. . . . I hold a broad view of the twelve-tone system which permits me to use the set or sets I have formulated as a source from which to draw a network of deductions. I tend to see the set as a premise that leads me in certain directions. You may not even be able to find it after a while, but the fact that I've formulated it, that it's back there somewhere, guiding my actions, means that it is still operative in the profoundest sense. If that's what serialism is, then I suppose I am a serial composer. But in general, I seldom propose an ordering and rigorously follow it and only it throughout a piece. And I seldom use a single set type with all its transformations throughout a work.[22]

Martino came to find his own way within the twelve-tone system through a gradual process, one that began to evolve even before he first attempted to use this method while studying with Dallapiccola. Upon observing the possible connections between his previous chromatic writing and the music of Schoenberg which he had begun to absorb during his days at Princeton, his style began to make a radical, yet "accidental" transition: "In the last movement of the *String Trio* (1954) I stumbled upon a twelve-tone row and began to fool around with twelve-tone music."[23] At this point his compositional approach began to assimilate familiar influences. "From 1955 on . . . it started to be twelve-tone in a kind of Schoenbergian way. And with *Contemplations* (1956) I made sort of a first effort to go beyond that, in a kind of Babbitt way."[24] For the next two years, Martino continued to experiment with more conventional twelve-tone procedures, but he finally found his niche within the system—"stumbling" yet again—this time in 1958.

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[22] Boros, 250.
[23] Wood, 325.
[24] Martino, interview with Plush, 51.

> I had begun to try to follow those paths laid out by Schönberg and Webern, but it was really quite unproductive. It wasn't until three years later, in my *Piano Fantasy* of 1958 that I stumbled for the first time upon a sort of useful procedure for me, which had to do with combining a set with one of its transformations to produce another set.[25]

Martino separated from tradition not only by utilizing this innovative procedure, which can also be called "aggregate formation," but also by disregarding the previously accepted restriction of using only one pitch set for an entire piece. "After the *Trio* (1959), I completely broke with the idea of using a single set as a determinant for a piece," the composer explains. "And with rare exception, I haven't done it since."[26]

Martino's willingness to expand his harmonic palette beyond a single originating twelve-note set of a given work clearly deviates from the methodology first employed by Schoenberg. Like Schoenberg, however, Martino would often alter the internal orderings of a set, or even repeat certain pitches of the set, if doing so served an expressive purpose.

> Creating musically appropriate set transformation and transposition patterns is much more important to me than maintaining internal set order numbers. I like to think that I can be very strict with the set at one point in a piece, very free with it at another, and in this way produce different kinds of music, give different impressions.[27]

Such an individualistic approach may not appear to fit within the established tenets of dodecaphony. Although the repetition of some pitches and reordering of others would seem to negate the widely assumed premise of the twelve-tone system, which is an equalization of all twelve pitches, Martino attempts to reconcile the two approaches. As he explains,

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[25] Boros, 221-22.
[26] Martino, interview with Plush, 51.
[27] Boros, 251.

> The notion of pitch identity, the notion that certain pitches are more important than other pitches, is not to be excluded from the notion of the twelve-tone system. There's nothing about the twelve-tone system, as practiced by Schoenberg, let's say, and by me, if I may say that, which insists that all pitches have to be the same. . . . what you do is start out with the idea that you have a bag of pitches and that you are controlling the bag. It's not the tonal system that's controlling you, but you that controls the system. But the inevitable result is that you select some pitches to be more important than others, you have to…some notes are higher, some longer, some louder. Hence some *have* to be more important than others![28]

To allow for such freedom, Martino took full advantage of the principles of combinatoriality.[29] By doing so, he could alter the internal pitch content of a work and simultaneously infuse it with a greater sense of unity. The composer explains his perception of the concept in the following excerpt:

> This idea of a "circuit of derivations," a path through the complicated chromatic world, was a big revelation to me. It led to my continued conviction that the twelve-tone system may be perceived as a universe of interconnected tone roads. That each piece could be imagined as but a different journey, on familiar paths, throughout that universe.[30]

Once Martino became more adept at using various aggregate-forming procedures, he outlined his approach in "The Source Set and its Aggregate Formations" in the Fall 1961 issue of the *Journal of Music Theory*. The article served as a response to his predecessor Babbitt's substantial article, "Set Structure as a Compositional Determinant" (April 1961), which discussed, among other things, certain properties of hexachordal inversional

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[28] Wood, 333.
[29] Combinatoriality is defined as "a technique whereby a collection of pitch classes can be combined with a transformation of itself to form an aggregate of all 12 pitch classes."
Grove Music Online, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 16 February 2005), <http://www.grovemusic.com>
[30] Boros, 222.

combinatoriality.[31] Martino candidly explains his purpose for writing the article: "I decided to gather up my material and try to make an article for the rest of us who didn't know anything. . . . It was intended as a dictionary for composers, not for analysts."[32] Here, Martino attempts to clarify in tabular form "all information essential to the calculation of most basic twelve-tone operations" and to explain "the general subject of harmony as the result of aggregate-forming combinations."[33] The article was well received and still stands as one of the defining documents for modern twelve-tone composers. Brian Alegant uses Martino's article as a point of departure for his own discussion, "Cross-Partitions as Harmony and Voice Leading in Twelve-Tone Music," and offers high praise for its achievements.

> [Martino's article] offered the first extensive investigation into the combinatorial properties of pitch class sets. This pioneering work examined the chromatic universe from a relational point of view, showing how twelve-tone operators could be used to control the horizontal and vertical elements of compositional designs.[34]

While Martino's article provides insight into the combinatorial procedures that are available with given pitch sets, the specific method he uses to decide which pitches to pull from his "bag" at the outset remains unknown. The initial set of a given work could be the result of a mathematical process (as is often the case in serial writing) or a mere product of chance. The composer discusses this pre-compositional stage in the following passage:

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[31] A more specific discussion of the combinatorial procedures Martino uses in the *Fantasies and Impromptus* will be presented in Chapter 3.
[32] Boros, 228.
[33] Donald Martino, "The Source Set and Its Aggregate Formations," *Journal of Music Theory* 5, no. 2 (Fall 1961): 226.
[34] Brian Alegant, "Cross-Partitions as Harmony and Voice Leading in Twelve-Tone Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 1.

> It's a very intuitive process that leads me ultimately to something which seems highly formalized. Analysis might lead you to deduce that the plan came first, but I usually have to search for it. I often improvise an entire section of a piece, then keep doctoring it until the process becomes semiautomatic, and patterns emerge. Eventually a contextual language develops, with its own grammar and syntax. Things begin to sound right, whereas before they seemed arbitrary. From this point on I can compose with the feeling of complete authority.[35]

Martino's "intuitive process," which can also explain his decisions regarding registral distribution,[36] often effects an improvisatory character to his music. Such a quality is one of the composer's primary objectives, both in theory and performance: "What I've really been after is a kind of highly structured improvisation. The performances of my music that I like best are the ones that give that impression."[37] Such an approach is not random, however, and cannot be equated with indeterminacy by any means; on the contrary, it is consistent with the composer's aesthetic and expressive objectives.

Fantasies and Impromptus

Not surprisingly, Martino has composed more music for clarinet (both solo and chamber works) than he has for any other particular instrument. By his own admission, he also highly favors the cello, but regarding the possibilities of register and sonority, he acknowledges that the piano has no equal. "I like the piano," he explains,

> because it does what the clarinet can't do. It's got more octaves. And, so next to the cello, I guess it's my favorite instrument. That's a complete turnaround because while I was writing à la Bartók as a student, I couldn't figure out what . . . the piano could do in music. . . . But my notion of the

[35] Boros, 257-58.
[36] The composer's affinity for large registral leaps likely stems from his training as a clarinettist. See Boros, 219.
[37] Boros, 217.

> piano as a vehicle for contemporary music has changed a great deal. And now I find it an ideal instrument.[38]

Martino's fondness for the piano is inextricably linked to his appreciation for the seemingly infinite number of sonorities that the instrument offers.

> The advantage of the piano is that it is a gigantic orchestra. It has an enormous range, enormous power, sufficient articulative variety, and it can be controlled by one person. It's like being the conductor of an orchestra in which you play every instrument. So, writing for the piano seemed to me ideal.[39]

Martino has composed seven works for piano, which, after the clarinet, is more than he has written for any other solo instrument. These works are listed in chronological order below:

With Little Children in Mind (1951)
Fantasy (1958)
Pianississimo (1970)
Impromptu for Roger (1977)
Fantasies and Impromptus (1981)
Suite in Old Form (1982)
Twelve Preludes (1991)

Regardless of how these pieces may differ in terms of scope and size—*Pianississimo* and the *Fantasies and Impromptus* are extended works, whereas the remaining pieces are smaller in design—they all share the common elements of dramatic and expressive virtuosity. Also, they are all seldom performed, most likely because of their sheer difficulty rather than any lack of musical substance.

Arguably his most significant work for piano is the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, composed in 1981. Pianist and author David Burge offers high praise for the piece,

[38] Martino, interview with Plush, 66-67.
[39] Russell Sherman, "Russell Sherman in Conversation with Donald Martino," *The Piano Quarterly* 38, no. 150 (1990): 25.

calling it the composer's "masterpiece for solo piano." He claims that here, "Martino's finest inspiration has been realized, providing pianists and listeners with a musical and emotional experience of rare substance and significance."[40]

The *Fantasies and Impromptus* were commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and are dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky.[41] The work was given its premiere in November 1982 by Dwight Peltzer at the Library of Congress. The *Fantasies and Impromptus*, perhaps more than any of Martino's other works, illustrate the composer's proclivity for placing elements of expressive romanticism in the context of traditional formal designs while communicating his musical ideas through a contemporary harmonic language. Thus this work is an ideal example of the composer's mature style.

[40] David Burge, *Twentieth-Century Piano Music* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004), 227.
[41] No evidence is given that Martino's dedication implies anything beyond the origin of its commission. The existence of a personal relationship between Martino and Koussevitzky is highly doubtful, since Martino was still a student of age twenty at Syracuse when the elder conductor and double bassist died in 1951. It is widely documented, however, that Koussevitzky championed the cause of contemporary American music. The foundation was set up in honor of his wife (Natalie) after her death in 1942 with the purpose of commissioning new works by new composers.

Chapter 1

18th-century Formal Procedures in the *Fantasies and Impromptus*

Donald Martino's *Fantasies and Impromptus* comprise nine movements: three expansive fantasies are each separated by two groups of three smaller impromptus. The composer states that the work "is intended to be performed in its entirety. Although any one of its movements may be performed separately, if more than one is performed, all should be performed, and in their original order."[42] Martino also provides the following program listing that illustrates the overall structure of the work and should be used in performance.

Fantasies and Impromptus for solo piano

Fantasy
Maestoso—Andante cantabile; Sempre ansioso;
Maestoso giubilante—Cadenza and Coda

Impromptu
Sospeso; Tempo rubato

Impromptu
Giocoso

Impromptu (Omaggio)
Andante flessibile

---pause---

Fantasy
Meditativo—Adagietto cantabile—Meditativo

[42] Donald Martino, *Fantasies and Impromptus for Solo Piano* (Newton, Mass.: Dantalian, Inc., 1982).

---pause---

Impromptu
Tempo rubato, sempre ansioso

Impromptu (Omaggio)
Vivace; Animato

Impromptu
Tempo di cadenza

Fantasy
Drammatico; Allegro molto—Allegretto—Allegrettino—
Andantino sentimentale—Allegro molto—Allegretto—
Andante sostenuto; Veloce—Ipnoticamente—Maestoso

The indicated pauses separate the work into three large sections; movements within the first and last sections are to be played *attacca*. The structure and function of the individual movements within each larger section may vary; generally, the impromptus offer a respite from the more elaborate fantasies. In the composer's own note for the work, Martino discusses the structure of the work as a whole and of its individual movements.

> My *Fantasies and Impromptus* represent a return to movement form and to a melodious and homophonic style of piano writing. While the impromptus are short, single-idea pieces, the fantasies are long and extensively developed.
>
> Each fantasy is differently made. The first is a sonatina: A, B, development, B, cadenza, and coda. (A is not recapitulated since its initial function was introductory.) The centrally placed fantasy begins as a meditation; time is suspended. But as the variation process unfolds, as time is filled with more and more notes, melodic fragments emerge coalescing about midway into long melodic lines. The final fantasy is a rondo.

> The macrostructure of the work is tripartite. The first four movements, though single and separate, form a group. The fifth movement stands alone. And the last four movements are not only played without pause but are linked as successive episodes of which the first three form a long introduction to the final fantasy.[43]

Martino admittedly uses three forms (sonatina, variations, rondo) that are rooted in eighteenth-century classicism. His use of such traditional structures for each of the three fantasies may seem paradoxical, since the fantasy as a genre implies a loose, even improvisatory, form devoid of clear structural boundaries, as opposed to the genres of sonata or concerto. Yet Martino has often insisted in both his writings and his compositions that prior assumptions (including those regarding notation, pitch organization, and formal structure) must be abandoned when studying, performing, or even listening to his music. Martino demands that one must accept his music for what it is, and not for what one may think it should be.

His use of conventional forms in the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, as well as in other works, can be directly traced to his admiration for music of the past. "I tended to learn more from the music of the distant past than from my contemporaries or immediate predecessors," Martino explains. "Maybe that's why I haven't been that innovative or experimental in my own music. I see my music as reflecting the ideals of the past, not as breaking new ground."[44] He continues: "I keep extending older forms" because "the balance and the traditional symmetries interest me much more."[45] The fact that Martino

[43] Richard Dyer, liner notes to Randall Hodgkinson, *Roger Sessions, Donald Martino*, Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc., originally released as NW 320, 1984; remastered as CD 80546-2 (1998).
[44] Boros, 214.
[45] Angeleita S. Floyd, "Donald Martino – On the Inside," *NACWPI Journal* 40, no. 2 (Winter 1991-92): 31.

implements such large-scale traditional forms, however, does not explain his particular approach to those forms.

A clear map of the structure of each of the three fantasies can be deduced from combining the composer's own comments regarding the form along with markings in the score. In the preface to the score of the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, Martino indicates that major structural areas are delineated by English Times Bold Typeface (e.g., **Allegro**) or by a double bar (||), whereas subsidiary sections or phrases are marked by English Times Typeface (e.g., Allegro). Even with this information, however, both the actual determinants of the basic structure and the musical features that distinguish one section from another remain ambiguous. For instance, in a traditional rondo form in tonal music, the return of the "A" section is easily identified due to its thematic presentation, generally unaltered from its first appearance. But in Martino's third fantasy (movement no. 9), which the composer identifies as a rondo, the lack of recognizable thematic content or a stabilizing tonic key renders a seemingly simple form quite difficult to unravel. In this fantasy the return of the A section could be determined by a number of possible variables, including tempo, dynamics, articulation, the use of a previously stated twelve-tone set in its original form, or a return of familiar intervallic patterns or identifiable motivic material. Martino's method of reconciling forms that are, by their very nature, inseparable from tonality with a twelve-tone pitch organization is remarkable. The following discussion will explore this reconciliation with considerable emphasis upon the traditional structures used in each of the three fantasies as well as the various structural determinants.

Fantasy #1: 1st movement

Since the composer has explained in the preface to the score that major structural areas are delineated by tempo markings in bold typeface and double bar lines, an outline of the structure of the first movement must originate with these indications. Those structural anchor points, along with measure numbers, are included in the diagram below.

	Maestoso	**m. 0**	**(2-beat pick-up)**
	Andante cantabile	**m. 22**	
‖	**Sempre ansioso**	**m. 55**	
‖	**Maestoso giubilante ma grazioso**	**m. 112**	
	Cadenza	**m. 119**	
	Coda	**m. 123**	

Merging this structure with the composer's own words regarding the sonatina form of the movement, each section can then be labeled as follows:

	Maestoso	**m. 0**	**A**
	Andante cantabile	**m. 22**	**B**
‖	**Sempre ansioso**	**m. 55**	**Development**
‖	**Maestoso giubilante ma grazioso**	**m. 112**	**B**
	Cadenza	**m. 119**	
	Coda	**m. 123**	

In Martino's use of "sonatina" form in the first movement as shown in the diagram above, he seems to take the term literally ("little sonata"). Whereas most eighteenth-century sonatinas have little or no development, however, this fantasy does indeed have a substantial development section. As he does in the other two fantasies, Martino uses a traditional form for his starting point but individualizes it according to his expressive tendencies and his arrangement of the twelve-tone rows.

In this first movement, the relationships between sections go far beyond tempo markings and bar lines. Martino effectively uses recurring patterns within the primary twelve-tone row of the movement and a melodic emphasis to delineate conventional structures.[46] Given the nature of this movement, some harmonic discussion is necessary to illustrate the structural relationships; a more detailed outline of Martino's dodecaphonic approach will be presented in Chapter 3.

As the composer explained in his own notes regarding the work, the A section is introductory. Its principal function is to present the primary twelve-tone row used throughout the movement, as well as the prominent hexachord (six-note grouping) of that row.[47] Despite the sectionalized layout of the structure, the recurring use of this hexachord creates greater consistency, almost to the point of blurring the structural divisions. In the opening few measures, the row presentation is direct, successive, and fairly unambiguous, although a subsequent presentation involves both simultaneities and

[46] Much of the analytical discussion of this movement draws upon prior analysis by Laurann Littleton in her work, "An Analysis of Martino's *Fantasies and Impromptus* for Solo Piano (1981)," M.A. thesis, University of Rochester, 1986.

[47] The properties of various hexachordal set classes are discussed more adequately in the appendix to Joseph Straus's *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990) and in Allen Forte's *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973).

insertions.[48] More important than the row presentation, however, are the properties of the hexachords within the rows, namely their intervallic content. The primary twelve-tone row of the movement is presented below in its original ordering and is divided into two hexachords of equal intervallic content.

Bb F# A C Ab G // Db F B E Eb D

The two partitions of the row are rearranged below according to their prime form {012346} to illustrate their identical intervallic content.

F# G Ab A Bb C // F E Eb D Db B

{012346} {012346}

This hexachordal set class, identified by Allen Forte as 6-2, serves as a connecting link among the various sections of this movement.[49] It is clearly presented in the introductory A section so that each subsequent appearance will have an unmistakable reference point.

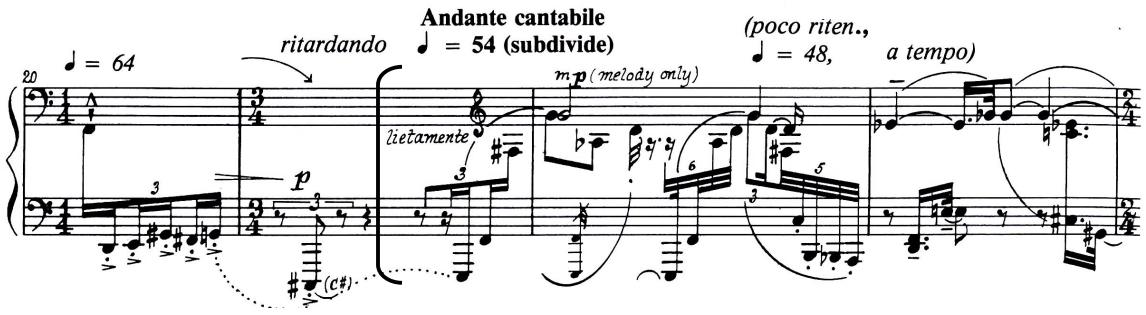
The hexachords emerge from the A section without the help of any identifiable melodic or thematic material. While there are certain intermittent, quasi-melodic fragments, these are irregular at best and render the entire section fairly unstable. In

[48] The formation of secondary aggregates through the use of simultaneities and insertions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

[49] Forte's set class names will be used in subsequent analysis for ease of reference; the numbers serve merely as abbreviated labels for the intervallic content of the hexachord in prime form (6-2 = {012346}).

contrast, the B section is ushered in at m. 22 by a more stable *cantabile* melody. As seen below (example 1.1), some pitches are repeated for expressive purposes.

Example 1.1. #1 Fantasy, mm. 20-23. Arrival of B section.



Beginning with the E in m. 21 and ignoring the repeated pitches, the first two measures of the B section yield two 6-2 hexachords, thus providing a harmonic link with the preceding A section.

mm. 21-22 **E F F# G Ab D // C B Bb A Eb C#**

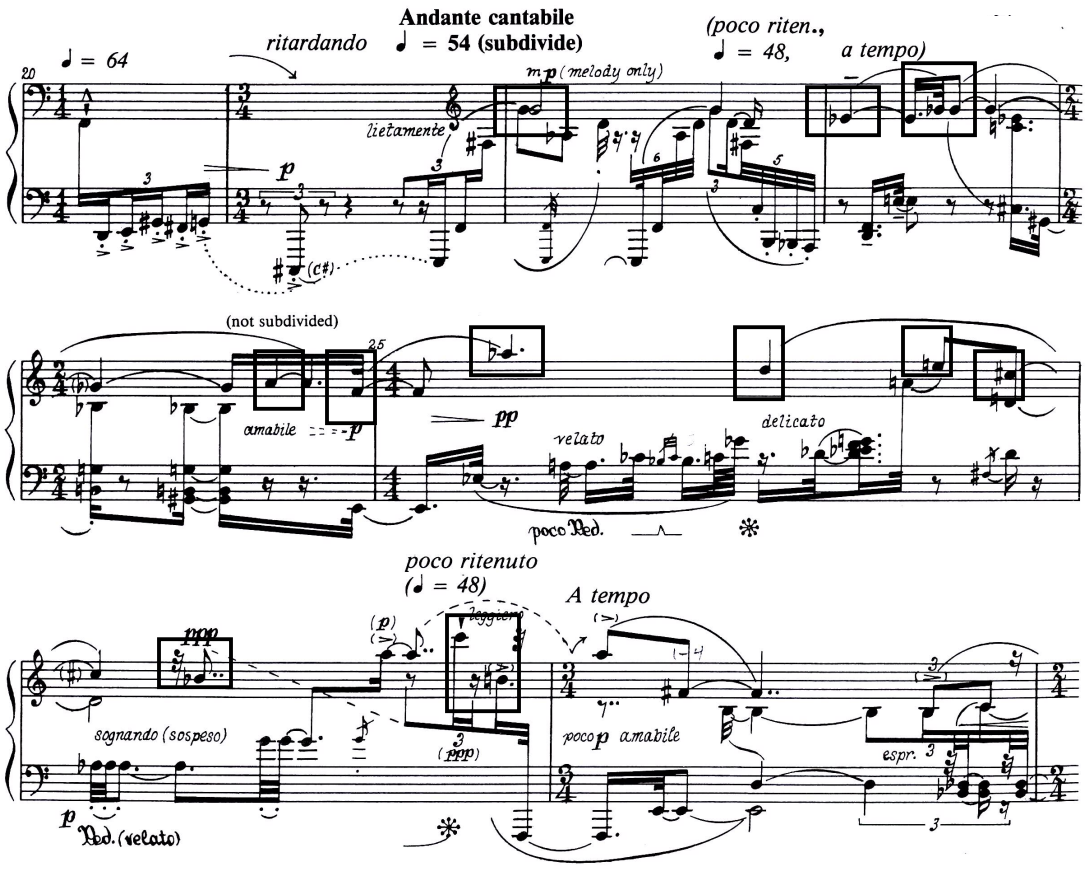
In prime form: {012346} **Ab G F# F E D // A Bb B C C# Eb**

In addition to the row identified above, a separate twelve-tone row emerges *melodically* and is indicated in the score through stem direction, dynamic indications and tenuto markings (example 1.2). According to Littleton, in the opening A section the composer's primary objective was to project the row, whereas in the B section (mm. 22-53) he uses the dimensions of articulation, dynamics, and register "to project not the row, but actual

melodies derived from the row."[50] Both hexachords of this melody conform to the familiar 6-2 set class.

Projected melody:	**G**	**Eb**	**Gb**	**A**	**F**	**Ab**	**//**	**D**	**E**	**C#**	**Bb**	**C**	**B**
In prime form:	**A**	**Ab**	**G**	**Gb**	**F**	**Eb**	**//**	**Bb**	**B**	**C**	**C#**	**D**	**E**
			{012346}							**{012346}**			

Example 1.2. #1 Fantasy, mm. 20-27. Melody projected by twelve-tone row.



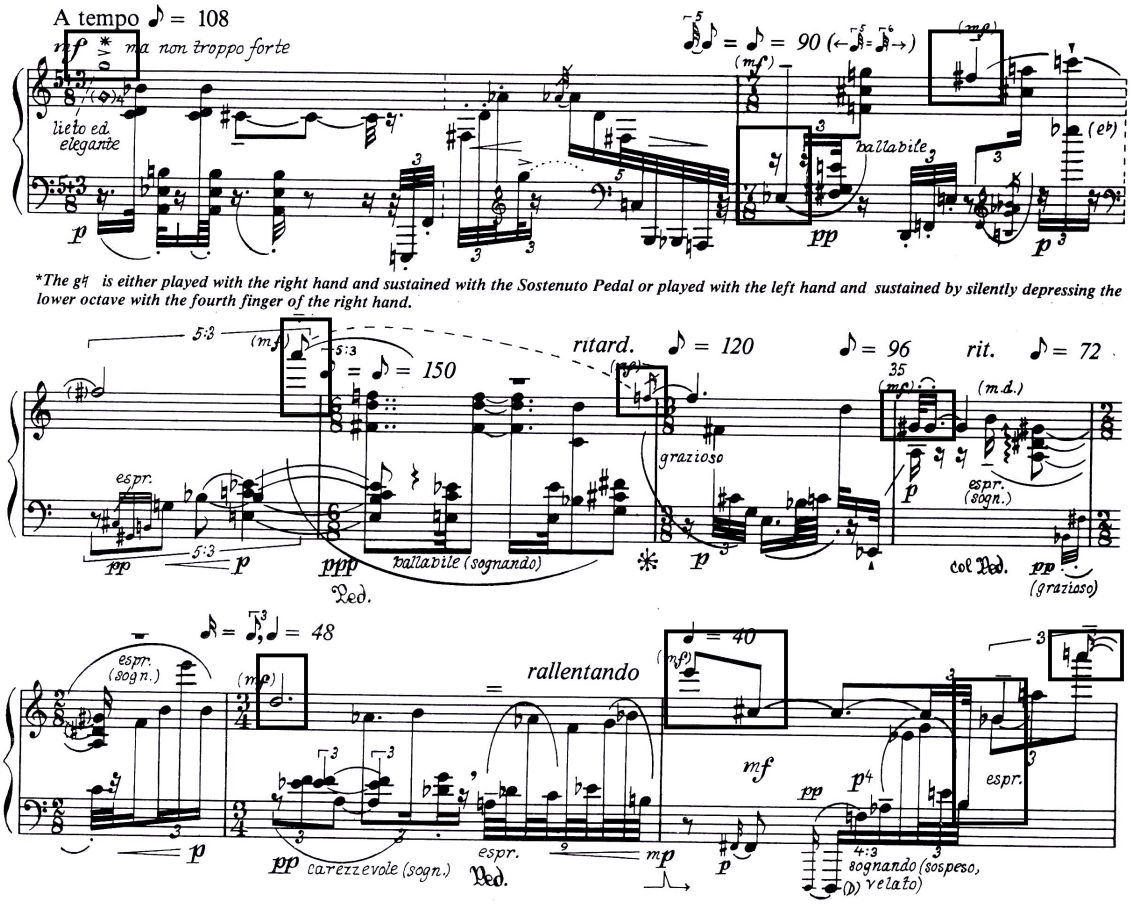
[50] Littleton, 46.

In mm. 31-40 (example 1.3), the exact melody is projected again (enharmonic equivalence and slight reorderings must be considered); although the texture is different, this melodic return nevertheless adds a strong element of coherence within the B section.

mm. 22-27 **G Eb Gb A F Ab D E C# Bb C B**

mm. 31-40 **G Eb F# A F G# D E C# B Bb C**

Example 1.3. #1 Fantasy, mm. 31-38. Identical melody projected, as in mm. 22-27.



The *Maestoso* at m. 54 serves as a brief transition into the development section, which begins with a strikingly similar pitch collection to the introductory A section.

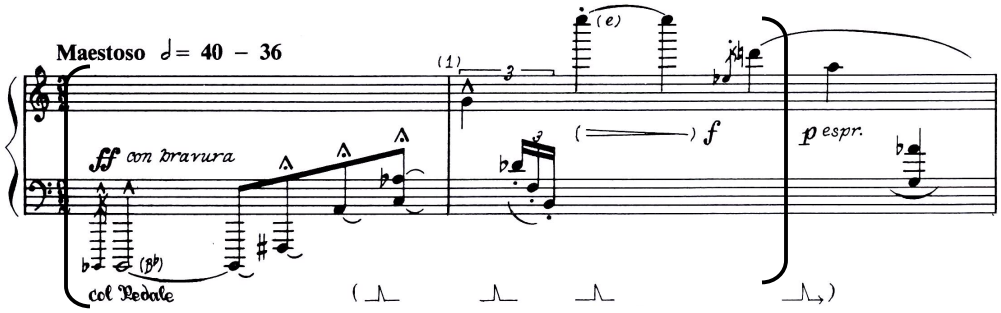
The original row returns here with slight reorderings that could even be considered "developmental" in nature.

mm. 0-1 **Bb F# A C Ab G Db F B E Eb D**

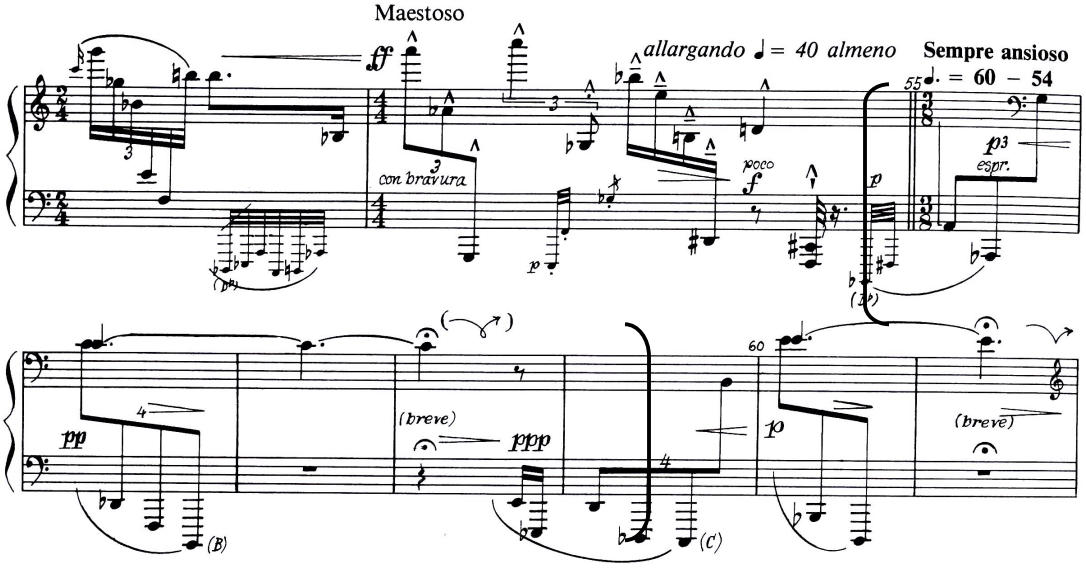
mm. 55-59 **Bb F# A Ab G C Db F B E Eb D**

Examples 1.4a and 1.4b compare these two passages.

Example 1.4a. #1 Fantasy, mm. 0-1. Opening measures of A section.



Example 1.4b. #1 Fantasy, mm. 53-61. Beginning of development section.



The 6-2 hexachords continue in the following few bars (mm. 59-63), thus providing another element of unity in spite of subtle discrepancies. From this point forward, however, the row presentation is not quite as apparent; here the composer begins to experiment with various developmental techniques. Littleton argues that Martino will often begin a row, then "interrupt" it with a fragment of another row, as in mm. 86-90 (such interruptions are often indicated by varying dynamic markings, as will be discussed in Chapter 3).[51] Also, certain hexachords will frequently vary only slightly from the expected intervallic content; in such cases one pitch from one hexachord has been substituted for another pitch from the complementary hexachord. For instance, in mm. 70-71, the following row is presented (repeated pitches have been omitted):

[51] Ibid., 21-22.

D Db Gb C F E // G# D# G B Bb A

If divided into two hexachords, the intervallic content of the two hexachords is {012456} and {012348}, respectively. If the F and D# are substituted for one another, however, both hexachords resemble the familiar {012346} pattern. The example below shows the two hexachords displayed in their prime form with these substitutions.

C Db D D# E Gb // B Bb A G# G F

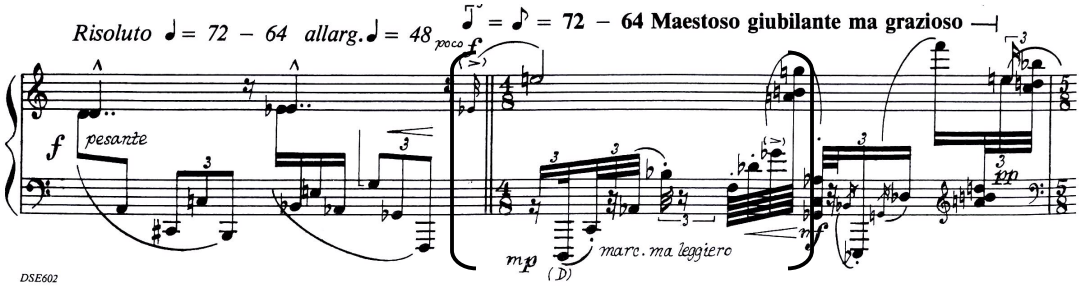
The various reorderings, interruptions, and substitutions lend to the section a sense of instability, a quality that is also evident in a more traditional development. Just as an eighteenth-century development section will often play with motives drawn from the main theme, Martino has created new pitch collections in this development by deriving them from the original rows in similar fashion.

Measure 111 functions as a brief transition (marked both *risoluto* and *pesante*) in that it features the return of the 6-2 hexachord, thus signaling the end of the development. Littleton implies that the emergence of the major second as a prominent interval at m. 112 also signals the arrival of a new section.[52] At first glance, there seem to be no congruencies between this section (mm. 112-118) and the original B section (mm. 22-53). First and most notably, the rows presented at the outset of this section diverge from

[52] Ibid., 34.

the recurring 6-2 hexachord; the first twelve-tone pattern presented at m. 112 results in the formation of two 6-22 hexachords {012468}, as seen below (example 1.5).

Example 1.5. #1 Fantasy, mm. 111-112.



Eb E D C Ab Bb // F Db Gb A B G

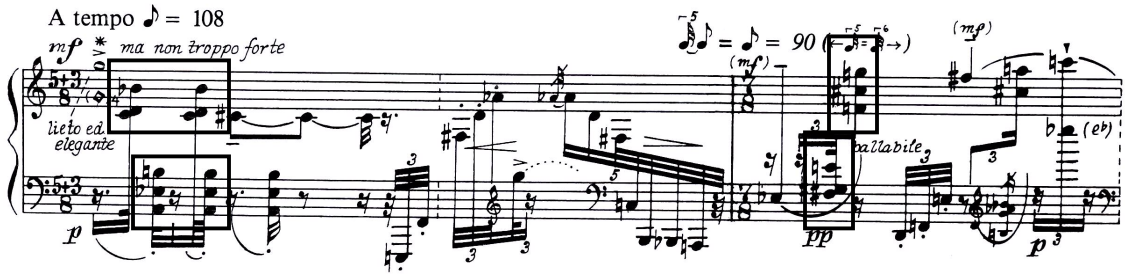
Also, this section retains the more anxious qualities as found in the development (e.g., continuous rhythmic activity, sudden registral shifts) rather than returning to the more cantabile nature of the original B section. This does not compromise the structure of the movement, but it serves to heighten the tension even further, culminating in the climactic and virtuosic cadenza in m. 119.

The glaring differences between mm. 112-118 and mm. 22-54 suggest that these sections may not be related after all, but such is not the case. First, it must be specified that two sections need not be absolutely identical to be equally labeled. Especially in this movement, where the development serves as a transforming agent for the B section, an exact return to the prior material would be both musically unsatisfying and dramatically disappointing. The coherence within the original presentation of the B section (see mm.

22-27 and mm. 31-40) has already been mentioned. Perhaps this extension accounts for the lack of true recapitulation after the development.

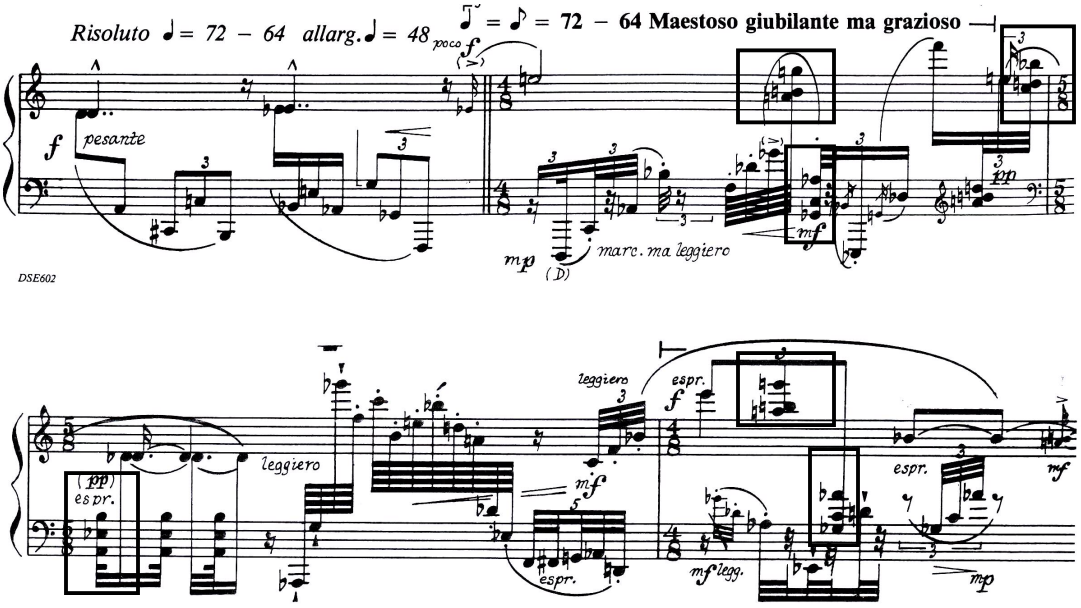
Despite the differences described above, correlations can be found between the two B sections to validate their association; namely, several accompanimental trichords (three-note groupings) can be linked together. In m. 31 (example 1.6), the trichord [C D Bb] in the right hand, when arranged according to its intervallic content in prime form, is represented as {024}. (In simplest terms, the grouping is just a pattern of whole steps.) The trichord in the left hand [A Eb B], when arranged similarly, is represented as {026}.

Example1.6 . #1 Fantasy, mm. 31-32. Trichordal patterns.



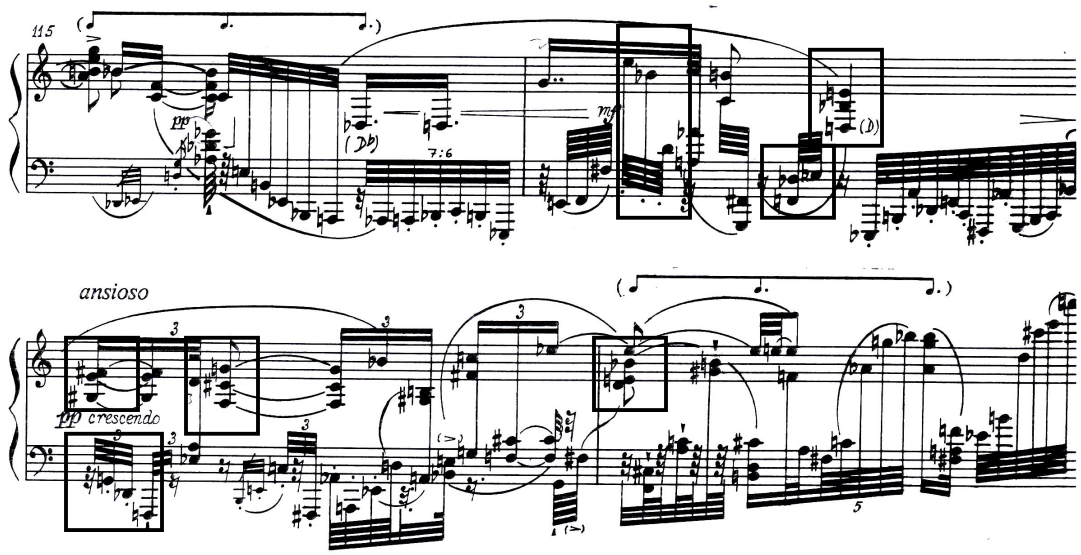
Similar patterns can be found in m. 32, but with the trichords switched between the hands: [F# G# E] {024} is now played in the left hand, while [F C# G] {026} is played in the right hand (example 1.6). This particular arrangement reappears, albeit in a somewhat transformed environment, in the final B section, beginning at m. 112. Here (example 1.7a), as well as in m. 114, the right hand contains [A B G] {024}, while the left contains [Gb C Ab] {026}. At the end of m. 112, the right hand has the same pattern transposed to [C D Bb] {024}, and the left hand follows with [A Eb B] {026}.

Example1.7a . #1 Fantasy, mm. 111-114. Similar trichordal patterns.



Similar patterns can be found in mm. 116-118, as seen below (example 1.7b).

Example 1.7b. #1 Fantasy, mm. 115-118. Similar trichordal patterns.



The consistency of the trichordal texture contributes not only to the unity of the section as a whole, but also to the increasingly dramatic nature of the movement.

The sonatina structure is usually associated with simplicity, at least in comparison to the more complex sonata. It would be a stretch to say that Martino has achieved any sort of simplicity in this movement, yet through the recurrence of the 6-2 hexachord, fragmented melodic rows (mm. 22-27 and mm. 31-40), and accompanimental trichordal patterns (between both B sections), he has accomplished a high degree of fluidity and unity among the seemingly disparate sections of this movement.

Fantasy #2: 5th movement

Martino explains that the fifth movement, which stands at the heart of the entire piece, is a variation form. "The centrally placed fantasy begins as a meditation; time is suspended. But as the variation process unfolds, as time is filled with more and more notes, melodic fragments emerge coalescing about midway into long melodic lines."[53] The variation process to which the composer refers is not to be confused with "theme and variations," for there is no single "theme" within this movement to vary. Instead, two elements are altered from one variation to the next: 1) the amount of time and space allowed between fragmented ideas; and 2) the primary intervallic content of consecutive pitches.

[53] Dyer, liner notes.

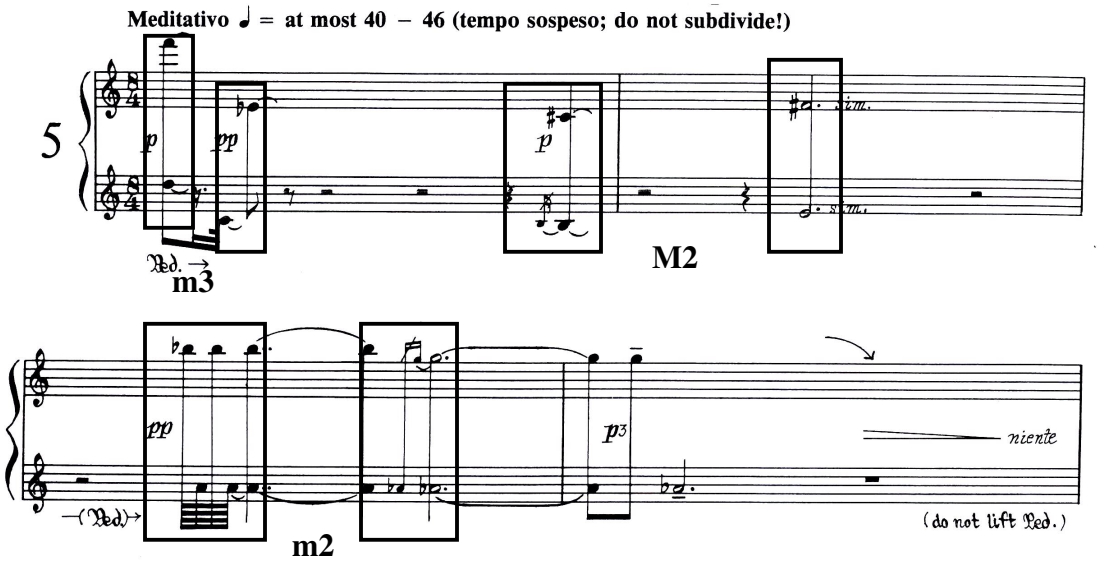
A complete representation of the variation structure in this movement, outlined according to the indicated tempo markings, is as follows:

Meditativo	**m. 1**	Introductory; establishes primary interval classes, creates atmosphere
Adagio molto; variazione	m. 13	Variation 1
Meditativo; improvisamente	m. 23	Transition
Adagietto cantabile; flessibile	**m. 27**	Variation 2
Andante cantabile Strict tempo; like a stately dance	m. 33	Variation 3
Andantino	m. 43	Transition
Meditativo	**m. 48**	Variation 4

The opening section of the movement (mm. 1-12) is the most expansive. The pedal is not to be lifted for several measures, and the rhythmic activity is at a minimum. The resulting wash of sound gives the opening a very ethereal, truly introductory quality. These few measures not only establish the mood of the movement, but they also present the primary intervallic content to be utilized in subsequent variations. The first twelve-tone row of the movement is presented in pairs, or dyads (example 1.8). The first two dyads are minor thirds (D-F, C-Eb); the second two dyads are major seconds (B-C#, E-

F#); and the final two are minor seconds (Bb-A, Ab-G).[54] Thus, the intervallic size gradually contracts from one set of dyads to the next.

Example1.8 . #5 Fantasy, mm. 1-4. Presentation of primary intervals.



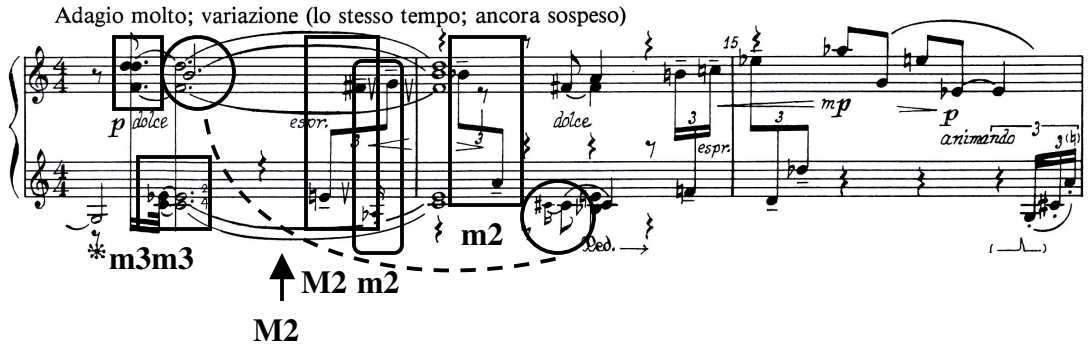
The first variation (mm. 13-22, see example 1.9) begins with the same progression of intervallic patterns, but one of the major seconds has been separated.

mm. 1-4	**m3**	**m3**	**M2**	**M2**	**m2**	**m2**	
mm. 13-15	**m3**	**m3**	**(M2 begins)**	**M2**	**m2**	**m2**	**(M2 completed)**

Also, the rhythmic activity begins to increase slightly in these measures as the amount of suspended time is diminished.

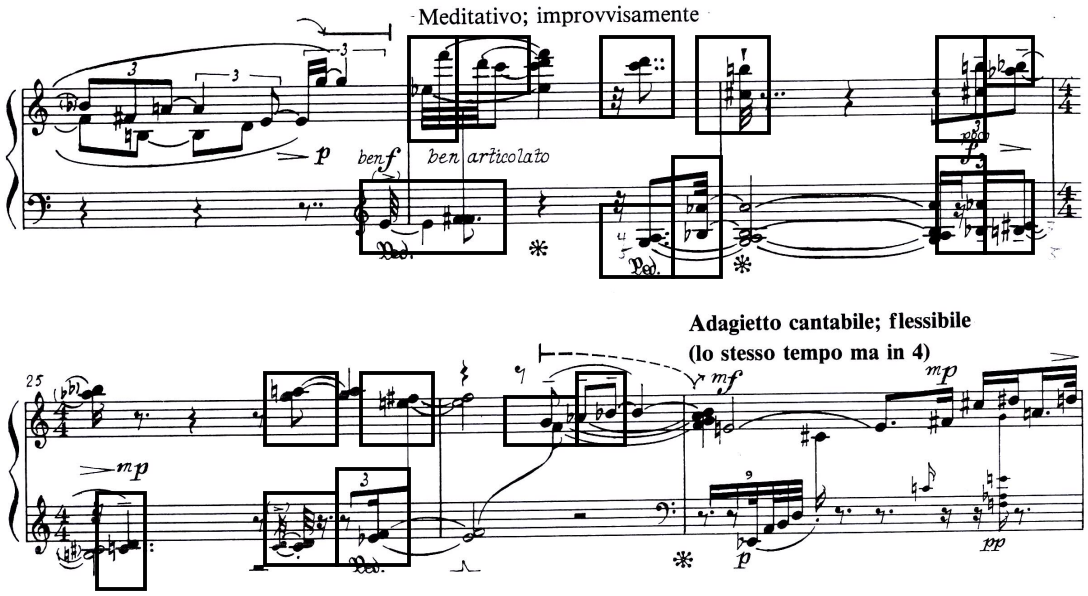
[54] For analytical purposes, intervallic relationships will be considered within the same octave (i.e., m3 will be used instead of m10).

Example1.9 . #5 Fantasy, mm. 13-15. Beginning of first variation.



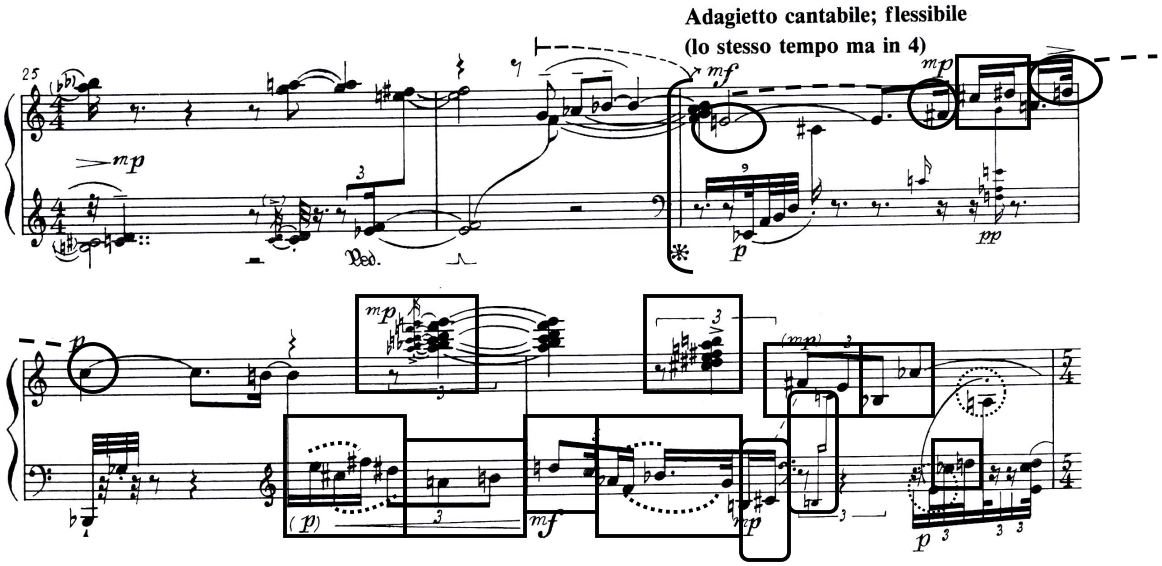
The *Meditativo* section that follows (mm. 23-26) functions as a transition and features dyads limited exclusively to major seconds (example 1.10).

Example 1.10. #5 Fantasy, mm. 22-27. Transition featuring major seconds.



Having been prepared by the prior transitional material, the following section (mm. 27-32, example 1.11) features primarily major seconds, although other intervals are used occasionally. The major seconds are not always presented consecutively as in the transition, however; often one note will interrupt. These intervallic patterns have been marked in example 1.11.

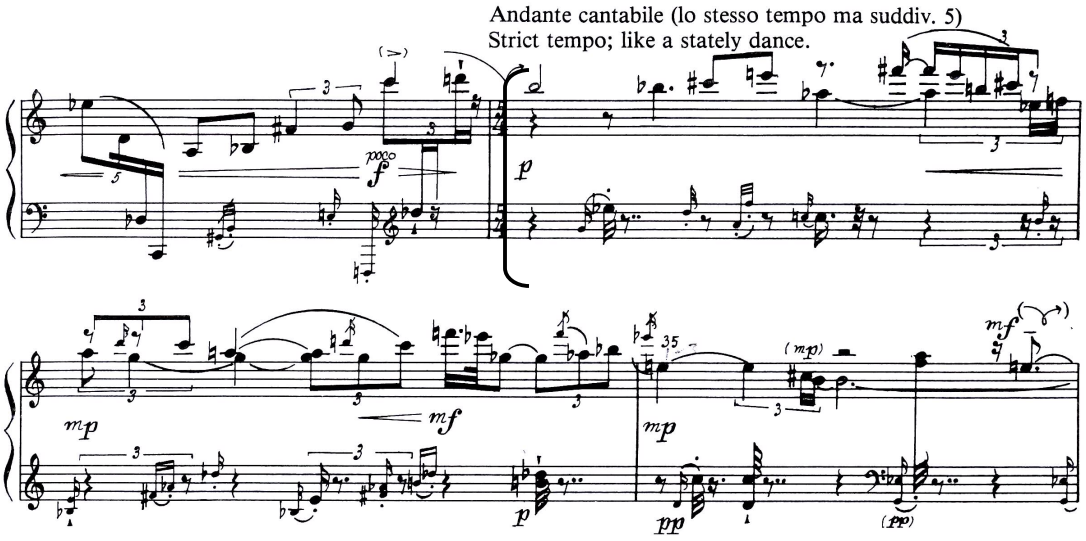
Example1.11 . #5 Fantasy, mm. 25-29. Beginning of second variation.



Unlike the second variation, the third does not feature one particular interval. Here the rhythmic activity increases, the texture becomes thicker, and the sense of spaciousness as presented at the beginning of the movement is completely gone. Incidentally, there is a slight melodic resemblance between m. 27 and m. 33 (compare the melodic contours in the right hand of examples 1.11 and 1.12).[55]

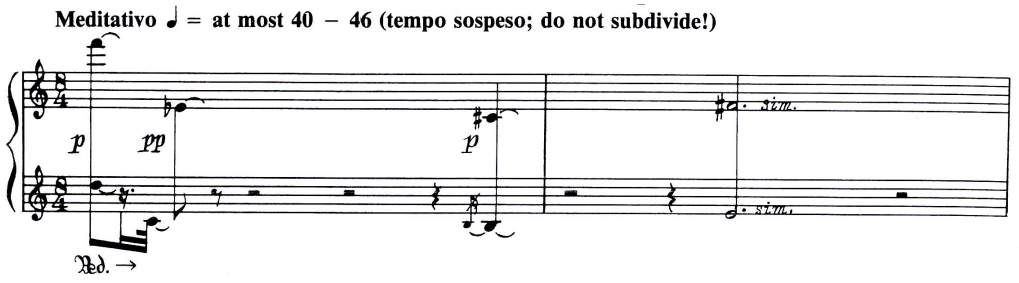
[55] Ibid., 102.

Example1.12 . #5 Fantasy, mm. 33-35. Beginning of variation 3.

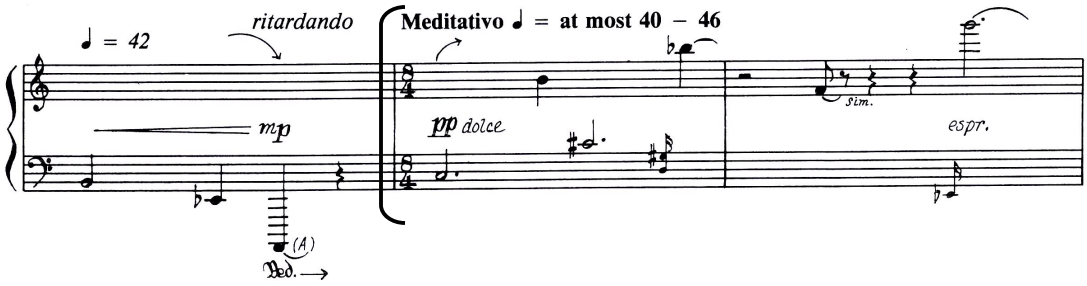


Measures 43-47 serve as a transition from the previous climactic material back into the ethereal quality of the opening. The atmospheric similarities between mm. 48-55 and mm. 1-12 are apparent, and the spaciousness from the beginning has returned, thus providing a sense of closure to the movement (examples 1.13a and 1.13b).

Example1.13 a. #5 Fantasy, mm. 1-2.



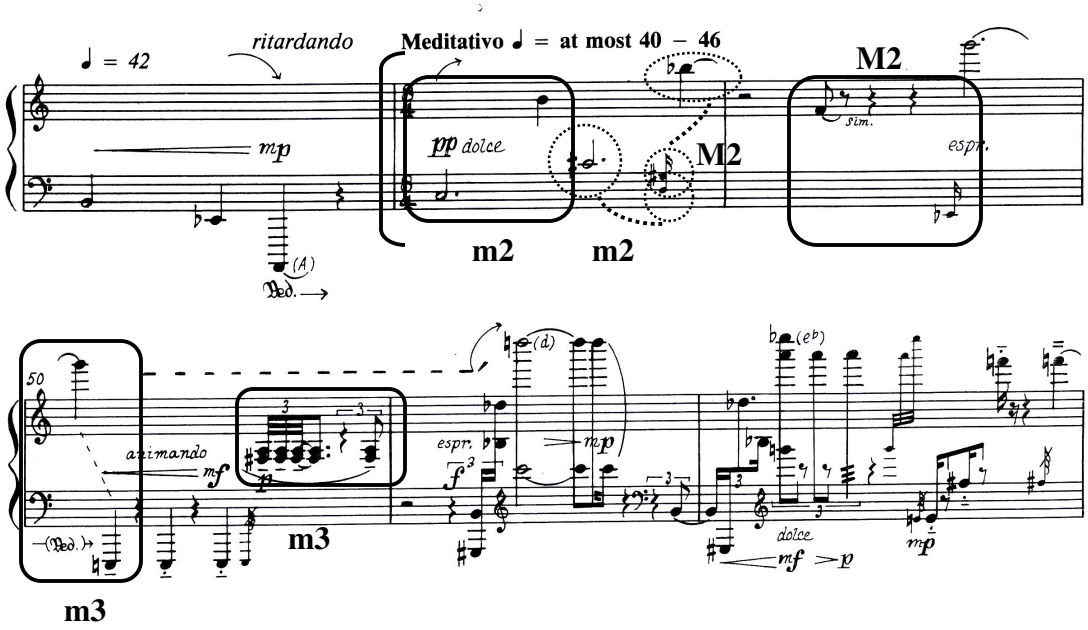
Example1.13 b. #5 Fantasy, mm. 47-49.



When compared with the opening, however, the order of the intervallic patterns in this final variation has been reversed, so that the minor seconds (C-B, C#-D) are presented first, followed by the major seconds (G#-Bb, F-Eb) and the minor thirds (G-E, F#-A). Example 1.14 shows the disguised presentation of these intervals in reverse order.

Example1.14 . #5 Fantasy, mm. 47-52.

Retrograde of intervals presented in mm. 1-4.



Fantasy #3: 9th movement

In the final movement, Martino has adapted a form (rondo) that has been traditionally defined by thematic return and tonal stability; despite the use of multiple expressive nuances and a complex harmonic language, he has effectively maintained the essence of that form while altering the structural determinants. As in the first and fifth movements, an outline of the structure of this final movement must originate with the composer's indications regarding tempo, particularly those in bold typeface and those set off by double bar lines. The complete structural diagram of the movement is as follows:

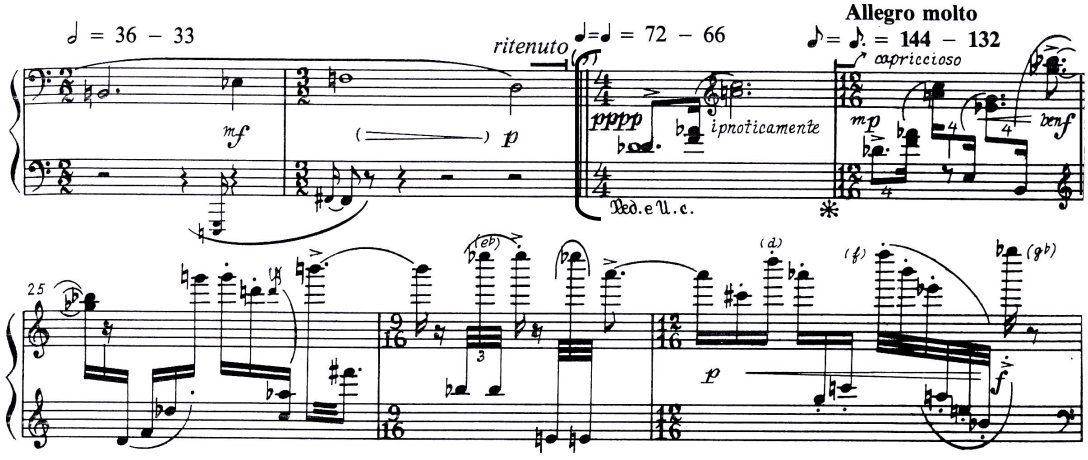
	Drammatico	**m. 1**	**Introduction**
‖	**Allegro molto**	**m. 23**	**A**
	Allegretto	m. 36	**B**
	Poco meno	m. 43	**transition**
	Allegrettino	m. 53	**A**
	Andantino sentimentale	m. 81	**C**
	Allegro molto	**m. 100**	**A**
	Allegretto	m. 109	**B**
	Andante sostenuto	m. 117	**B (extended)**
	Brief tempo change indicated with metronome marking	m. 125	**A (fragments)**
‖	Veloce	m. 128	**transition**

Ipnoticamente	**m. 132**	**Coda 1**
Maestoso	**m. 150**	**Coda 2**

Given the complexities of Martino's harmonic approach, finding correlations between these sections becomes much more difficult. Yet the form of this movement can be illustrated apart from a tedious discussion of the intricate harmonic relationships. There are three primary factors that serve to differentiate the various sections within this movement: texture; intervallic content; and mood or tempo.

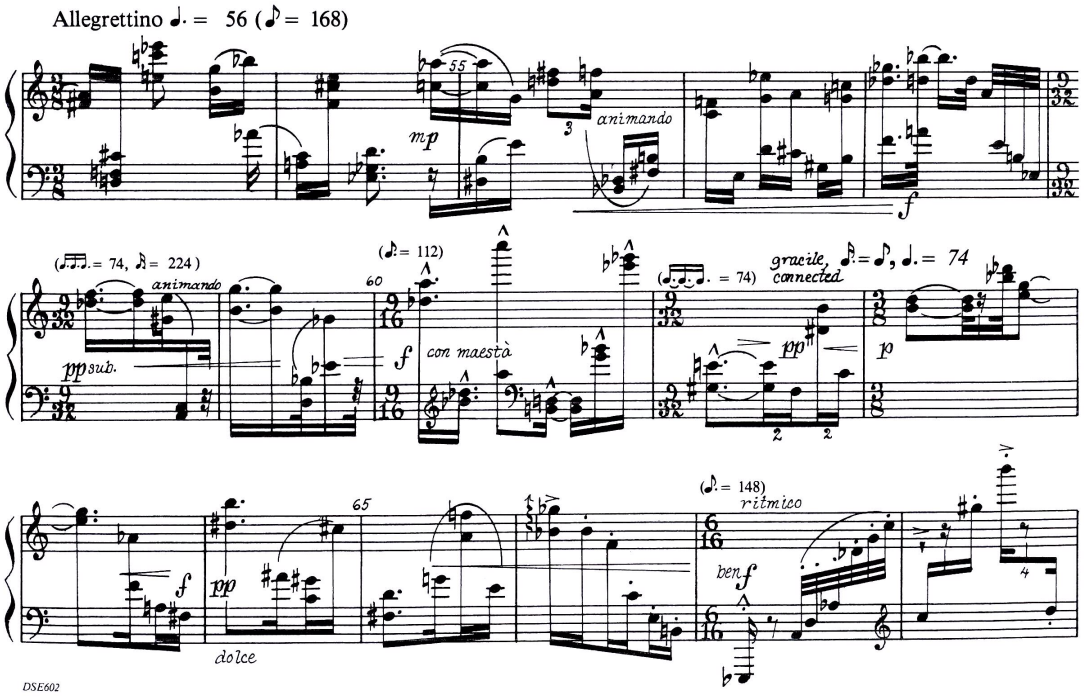
While the writing in the opening few measures of this movement is very dramatic, it is also fairly unstable and fragmented. Since these measures (mm. 1-22) do not appear again, their function is merely preparatory; thus, this section is best labeled as an introduction. Measure 23 introduces a key motive, namely the third, in the texture, and the more continuous, yet more complex rhythmic patterns that emerge at the *Allegro Molto* in m. 24 signal the arrival of a new section, A (example 1.15). Moreover, the combination of the dotted rhythms and the thirds as seen in m. 24 serves as one recurring motivic indicator of this section and can be identified again in mm. 31, 60, 62, 73, 104, 125-126.

Example 1.15. #9 Fantasy, mm. 21-27. Opening bars of first A section.

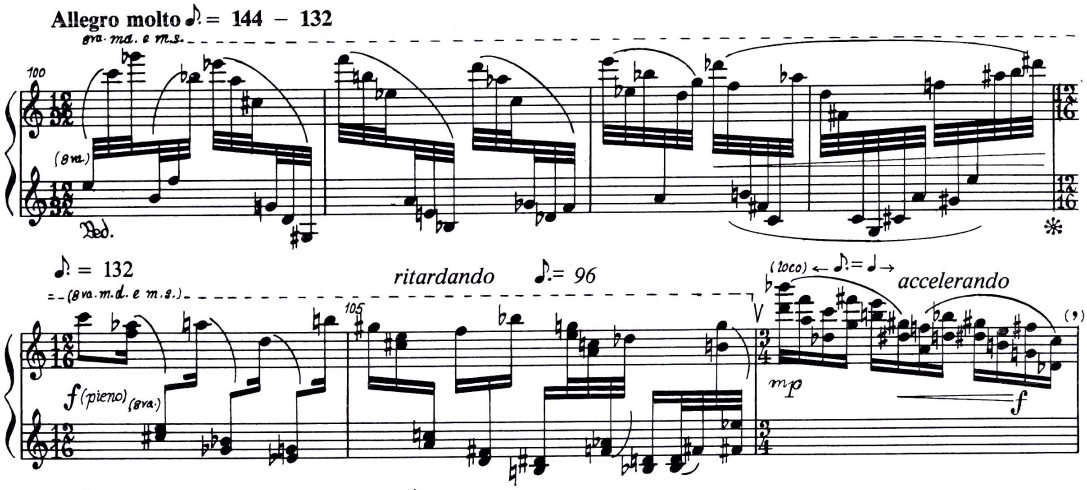


This first section establishes a point of reference, and identifying each subsequent appearance of similar passages is now possible. As mentioned above, the characteristic thirds alternating with more continuous rhythmic passagework first return in m. 53 (example 1.16a), and again in m. 100 (example 1.16b). In this latter passage the intervallic texture has been expanded to include sixths and sevenths as well.

Example1.16a . #9 Fantasy, mm. 53-68. First return of A section.



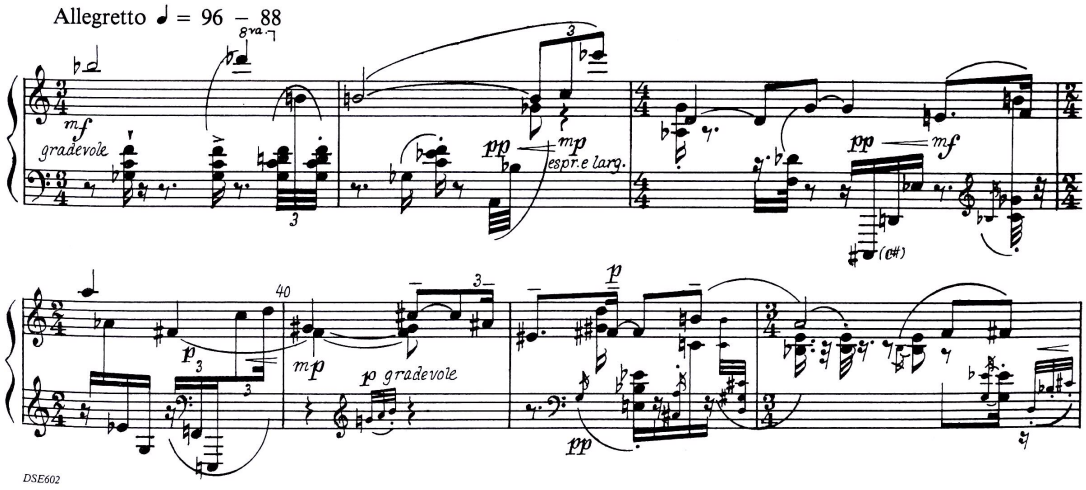
Example 1.16b. #9 Fantasy, mm. 100-106. Second return of A section.



A change in tempo at m. 36 marks the beginning of a new section, B (example 1.17). In addition, the melodic, yet angular, nature of this passage provides an obvious

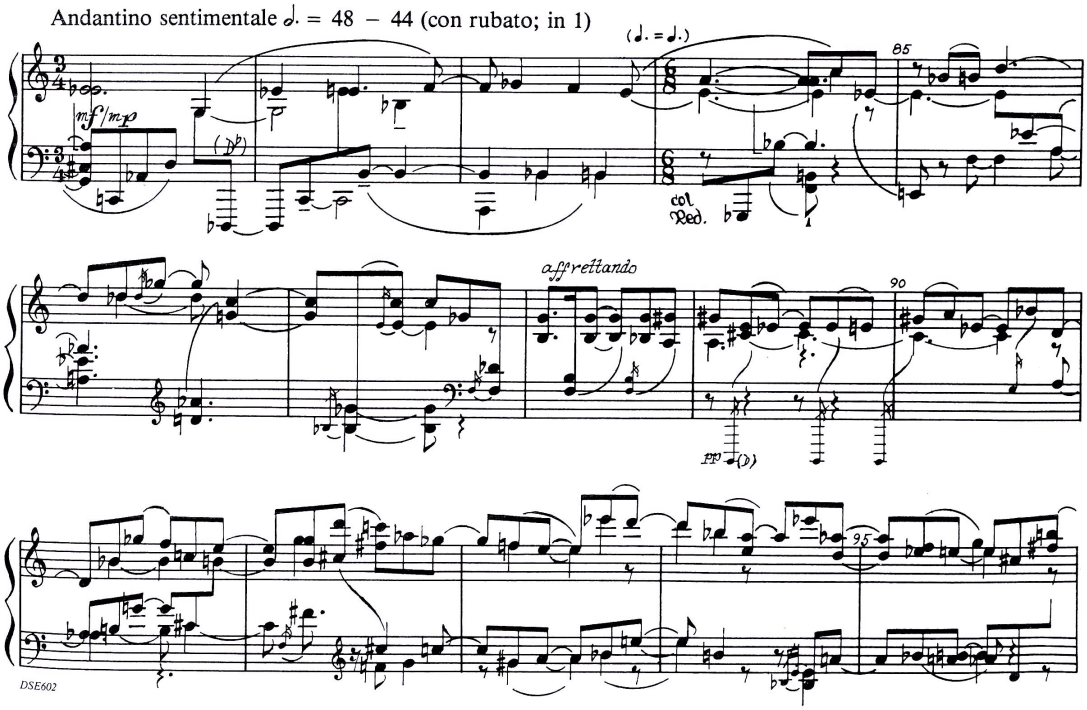
contrast from previous material. The continuous rhythmic passagework in the preceding section has yielded to a more stable and predictable flow, and the melody has assumed a quasi-thematic function. (The melody in the excerpt below is indicated by either stem direction or tenuto markings.)

Example 1.17. #9 Fantasy, mm. 36-42. First appearance of B section.



The following few measures (mm. 43-52) serve as a gradual transition from the B section back to the A section. The next change in tempo occurs at m. 81, at the *Andantino sentimentale*. This section, which is best labeled as "C", is much less disjunct in its melodic presentation than the B section; its lyricism is expressed in the midst of extensive chromatic half-step motion (example 1.18).

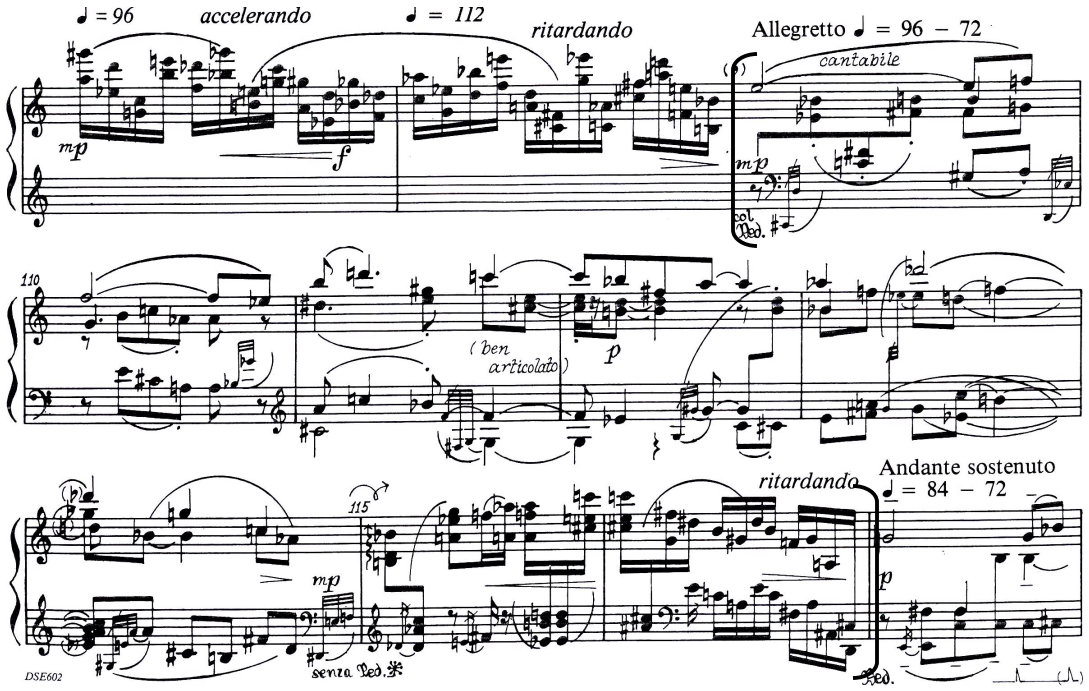
Example 1.18. #9 Fantasy, mm. 81-95. Only appearance of C section.



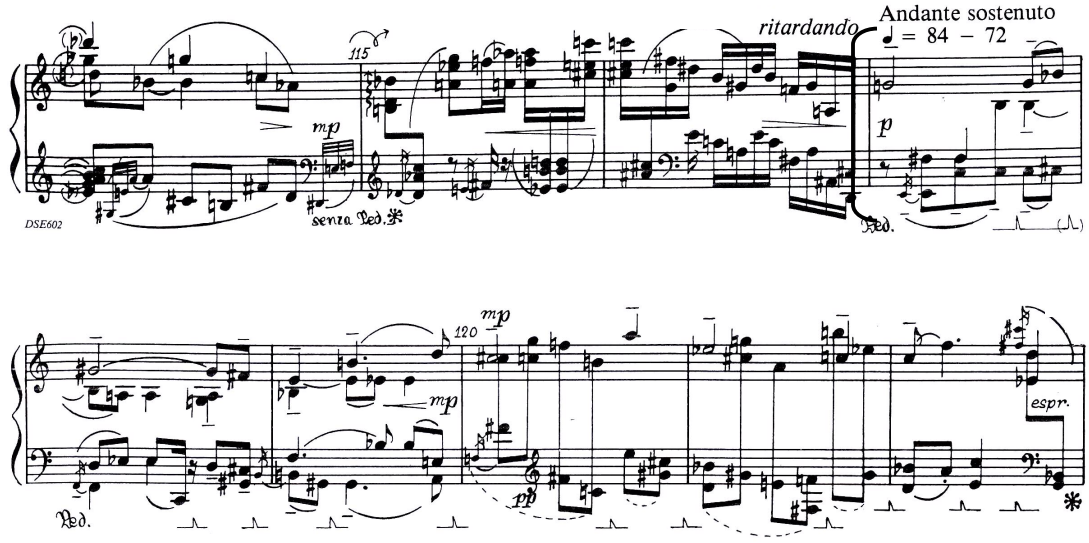
After the third appearance of the A section (m. 100, example 1.16b), the *Allegretto* tempo returns in m. 109, as in m. 36. Although the texture is different from the first appearance, the intervallic patterns are similar enough to label this section as a return of B.

The tempo slows at m. 117 (*Andante sostenuto*), but there is no other noticeable change; the texture remains strictly homophonic, and the intervallic content both in the melodic line and in the accompaniment is similar enough to call this an extension of the previous B section (examples 1.19a and 1.19b).

Example 1.19a. #9 Fantasy, mm. 107-117. 2nd appearance of B section.

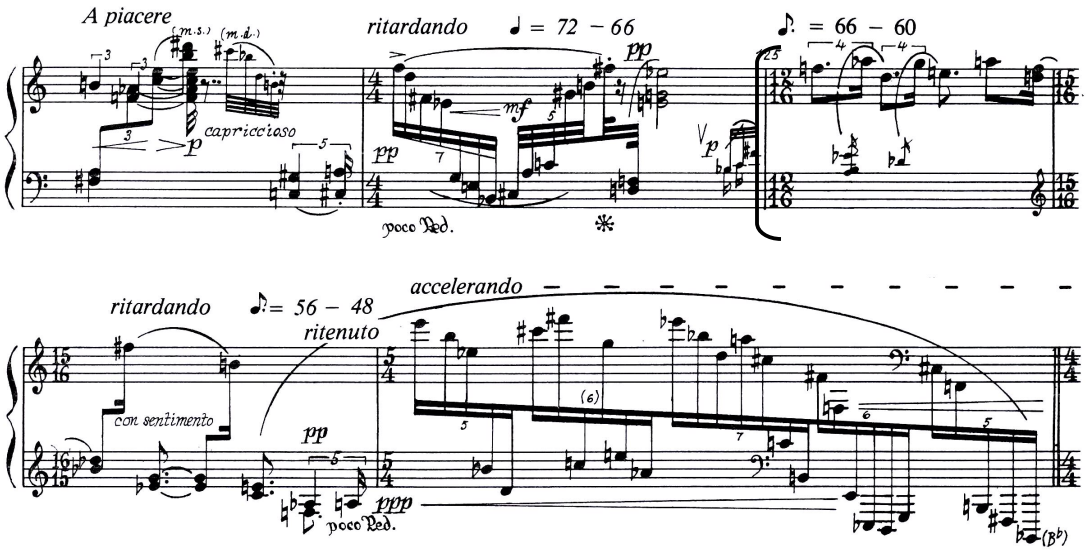


Example 1.19b. #9 Fantasy, mm. 114-122. Extension of B section.



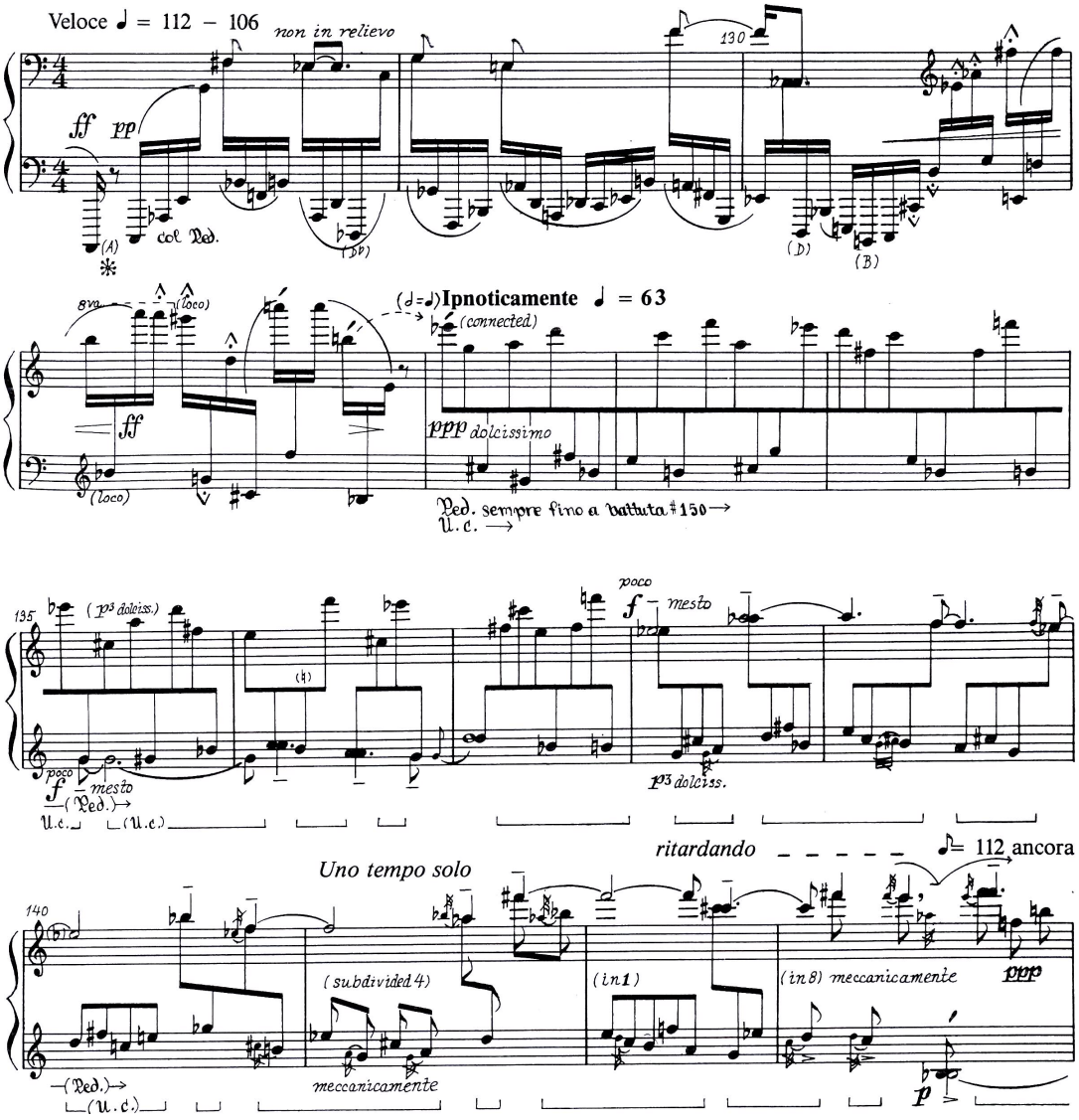
While there is no final extended return of A, fragments of the recognizable dotted-rhythm thirds leading to more accelerated passagework appear in mm. 125-127 (example 1.20).

Example 1.20. #9 Fantasy, mm. 123-127. Fragmented return of A.

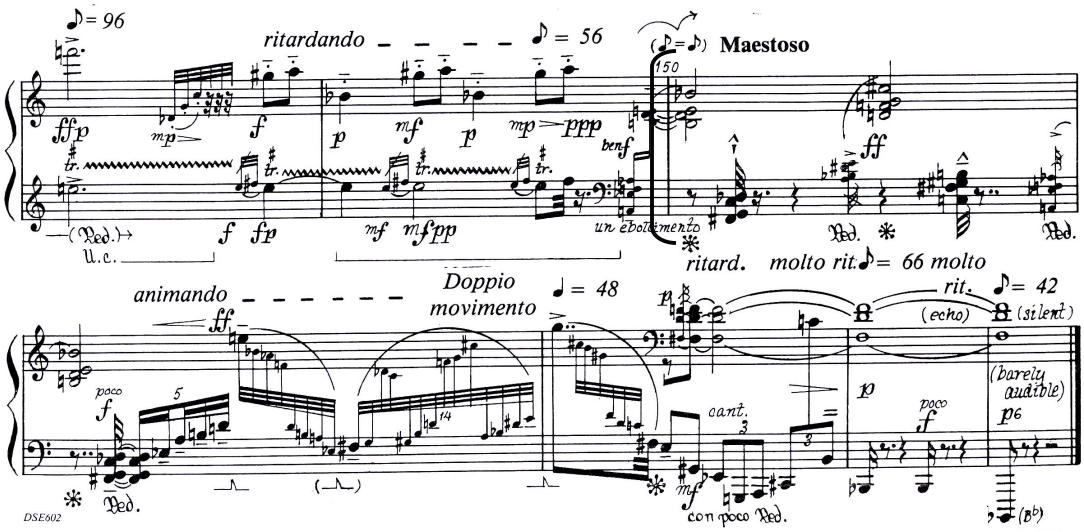


These measures are followed by a brief transition (example 1.21a) that leads into the final two sections of the movement. These sections, marked *Ipnoticamente* and *Maestoso*, respectively, serve to bring the movement to a close. They serve no recapitulative function, neither do they present essentially new material. The first of these two sections, Coda 1 (example 1.21a), primarily features a single line in the upper register presented as continuous eighth notes, almost to the point of becoming hypnotic. In contrast, Coda 2 (example 1.21b) features thicker textures in the lower register and ends the work on the same note with which the first movement began, Bb.

Example1.21 a. #9 Fantasy, mm. 128-143. Transition and Coda 1.



Example 1.21b. #9 Fantasy, mm. 148-154. Coda 2.



In the three fantasies of the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, Martino illustrates how conventional forms can be used in an unconventional way. By allowing the eighteenth-century tonal-based models of sonatina, variation, and rondo to be structurally defined by elements such as texture, intervallic/hexachordal content, and tempo rather than traditional principles of tonality, Martino has not weakened those structures by any means. He has merely infused them with the harmonic language at his disposal, and in so doing, he has created a new understanding of traditional forms, one that welcomes expressive gestures and embraces twelve-tone designs.

Chapter 2

19th-century Romanticism in the *Fantasies and Impromptus*

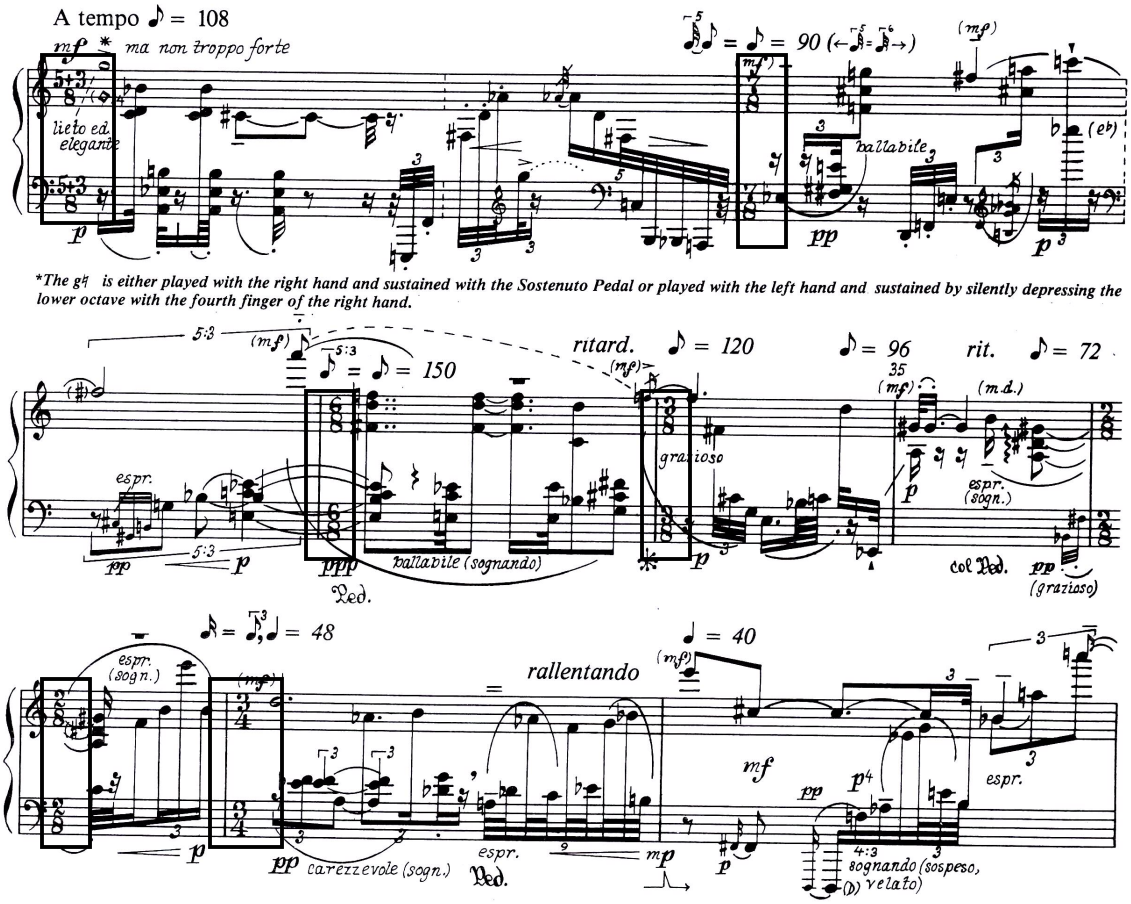
The presence of traditional—even classical—formal procedures in the *Fantasies and Impromptus* is undeniable, even if initially obscured. But a more overt characteristic of this work, and of Martino's works in general, is an unrelenting and expressive romanticism. Such romanticism manifests itself in many ways, not the least of which is the composer's predilection for a *tempo rubato*. The large number of tempo changes featured in the *Fantasies and Impromptus* is a direct result of the composer's expressive intentions. These fluctuations in tempo are also characteristic of Martino's music in general. As the composer admits, "I can't keep a steady tempo."[56] Although he often leaves the execution of such liberties to the discretion of the performer, he frequently specifies metronome markings within a marked *ritardando* or *accelerando*, so that there is no doubt as to how much or how little rubato is appropriate. In his preface to the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, the composer notes, "Metronome marks are approximate. They are essentially editorial and should seldom be followed literally. Moreover, except where terms like *alla misura* appear, metronome marks are not meant to impose rigidity of pulse. On the contrary, tempo rubato is the norm."[57]

In addition to many fluctuations in tempo, Martino's scores often feature several meter changes, subtle dynamic gradations, explicit articulations, and other descriptive performance indications. The following example (example 2.1) includes a meter change

[56] Wood, 332.
[57] Martino, score.

at almost every measure, along with a specific metronome marking as well. Very specific articulation and dynamic markings can also be found in this passage.

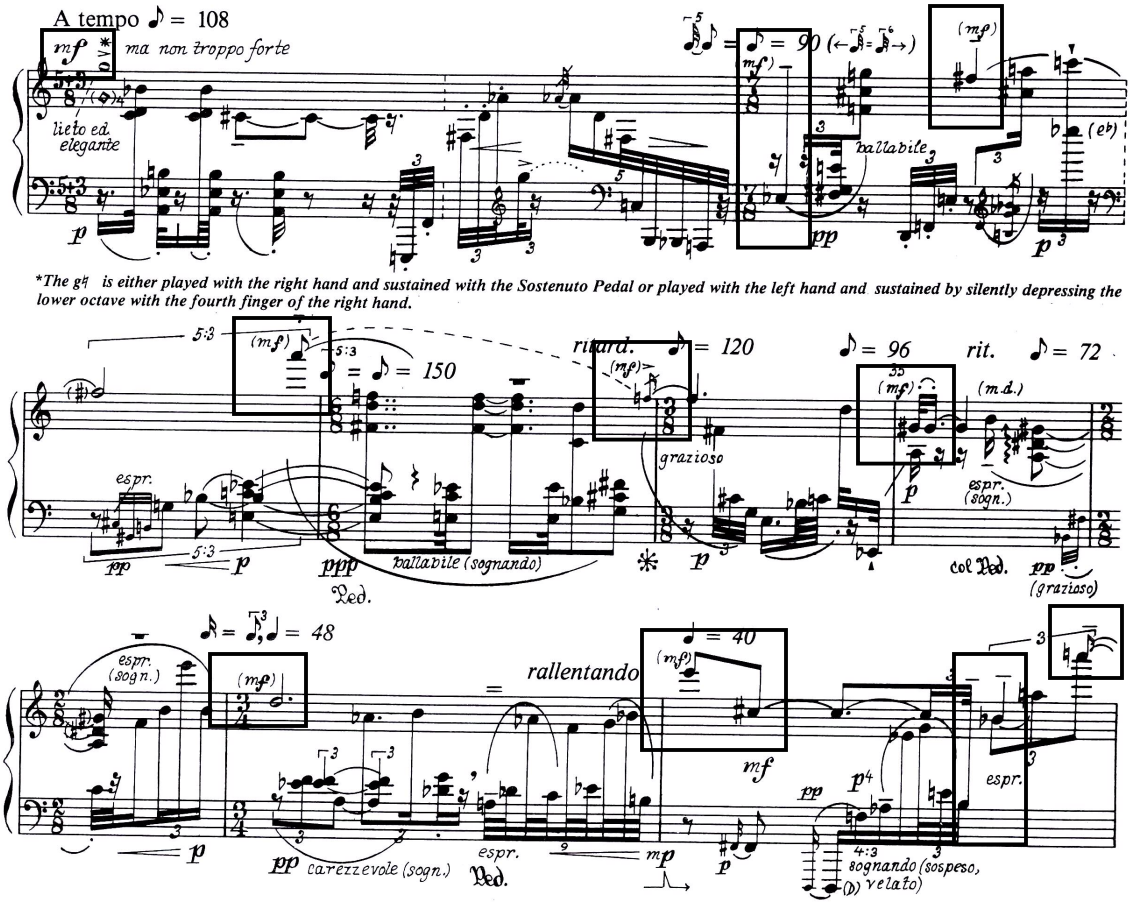
Example 2.1. #1 Fantasy, mm. 31-38. Frequent meter changes.



In the midst of so many expressive visual markings and an aurally dense musical texture, a long lyrical line can often be both seen and heard. The composer frequently indicates this line by specifying the stem direction of certain notes or by labeling them with tenuto markings or parenthetical dynamic markings (***mf***). Such markings are

indicative not only of the composer's expressive intentions for this particular passage, but also of the twelve-tone row that is being placed at the foreground. The preceding example is presented again below with the melodic line clearly indicated (example 2.2).

Example 2.2. #1 Fantasy, mm. 31-38. Melody indicated by expressive markings.



Martino explains the reasoning behind such attention to detail in his article, "Notation in General – Articulation in Particular" (1966).

> The ideal musical notation would exactly convey to the performer (i.e., any competent reader of the score) the composer's intention, however

> precise that intention might have been. While it should be assumed that the composer's notation is as accurate as he is capable or desirous of making it, it does not follow that his notation corresponds exactly to his intention.[58]

Martino's precision thus attempts to leave no doub in the performer's mind regarding the composer's intentions. Markings indicate the specific qualities of tempo, rhythm, dynamics, and articulation, and at the same time reveal the more abstract qualities of shape, color, and expression. It may seem that Martino desires every performance of his music to adhere unfailingly to his markings; yet the specificity of his notation is linked to the music's inherent expressivity, and thus welcomes an artistic interpretation. "In my own music I attempt as best I can to notate all necessary nuances," the composer explains, "but a mechanistic reproduction is furthest from my mind!"[59] Martino's notational precision and his impatience with the commercialism of many publishing firms led him to establish his own company, Dantalian, Inc., in 1978.

Another element of Martino's music that is characteristic of nineteenth-century romanticism is its virtuosic writing. Much of Martino's compositional output presents formidable technical challenges. The composer acknowledges this attribute of his music and offers justification for it.

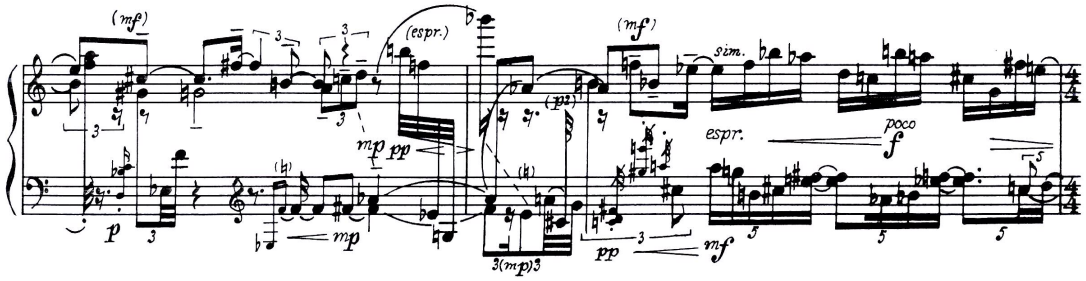
> I know that I write difficult music, but I have never written anything that is unplayable. It has all been very carefully calculated, tested at the instrument. It may be at the margin of playability for most performers at a given point in time, but ultimately it is negotiable . . . . My pieces are not meant to be etudes. Virtuosity always serves an expressive purpose. I don't want an absolutely perfect performance if it's going to sacrifice the energy.[60]

---

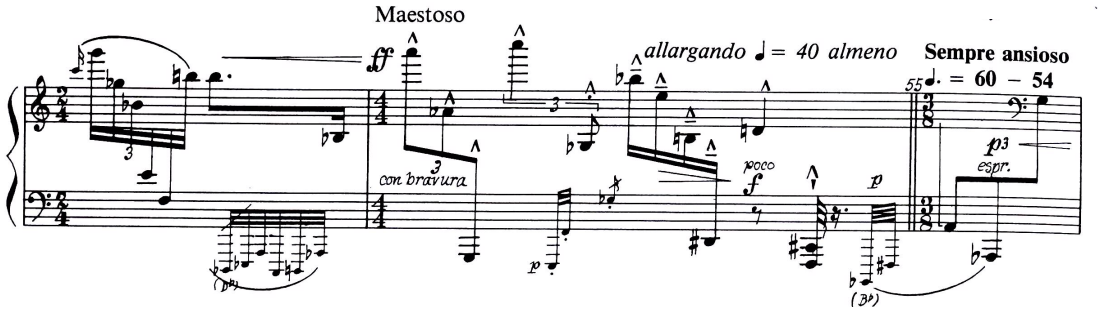
[58] Donald Martino, "Notation in General – Articulation in Particular," *Perspectives of New Music* 4, no. 2 (1966): 49.
[59] Ibid., 49.
[60] Boros, 225.

Such virtuosity is revealed in many ways, including rhythmic complexities (example 2.3), large registral leaps (example 2.4), and cadenza-like passages (examples 2.5a and 2.5b). One only needs to glance at the score of any movement of the *Fantasies and Impromptus* to find ample evidence of similar writing. As David Nicholls notes, "The writing for most of the work's 30-minute span is as tough and uncompromising as anything else in Martino's output."[61]

Example 2.3. #5 Fantasy, mm. 36-37. Rhythmic complexities.

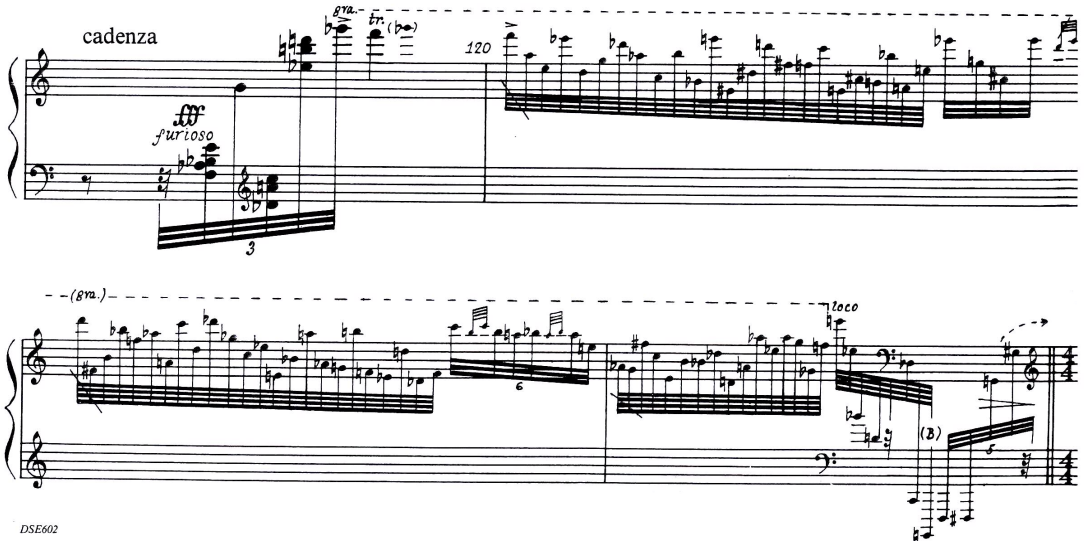


Example 2.4. #1 Fantasy, mm. 53-55. Large registral leaps.

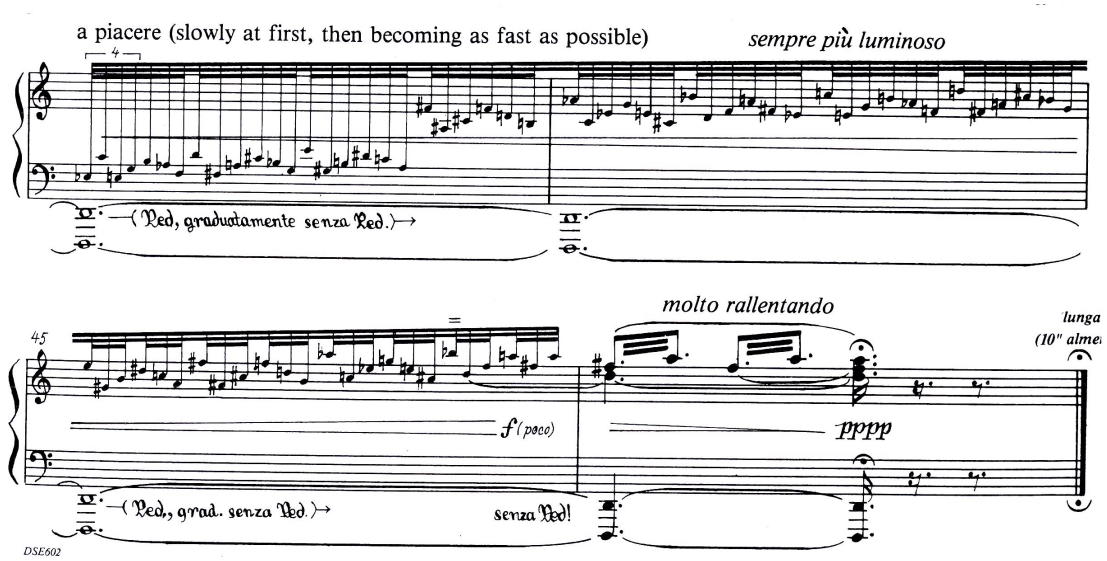


[61] David Nicholls, "Donald Martino: A Survey of His Recent Music," *Music & Letters* 73, no. 1 (1992): 77.

Example 2.5a. #1 Fantasy, mm. 119-122. Cadenza passage.



Example 2.5b. #4 Impromptu, mm. 43-46. Cadenza-like passage.



Perhaps Martino's most overt reference to nineteenth-century romanticism in the work in question is the title itself, *Fantasies and Impromptus*. Here Martino chooses to evoke two genres that coincide with his rather improvisatory style of writing. While Martino's three fantasies maintain their inherent improvisatory character, they assume large-scale structures and function both as a platform for virtuosic display and as a vehicle for atmospheric invention. They relate to other works of the same genre through their similarities of mood and character, but any direct connection to a specific work of the nineteenth century remains highly unlikely.

In contrast to the fantasy, a genre that has been employed throughout several periods of music history, the impromptu exclusively belongs to the nineteenth century. The most familiar works bearing this specific title are character pieces for solo piano by Schubert and Chopin. Martino is one of only a handful of twentieth-century composers to employ the title.[62] His use of the label is no more than an attempt to evoke an impression of improvisation. The six movements bearing the title are generally smaller in scope than the fantasies, and they are much freer with regard to structure.

The title of the work is Martino's most direct allusion to nineteenth-century romanticism, but a more convincing statement of his allegiance to the aesthetics of romanticism is his indirect homage to composers of that time. The fourth and seventh movements of this work each contain the subtitle "*Omaggio*." Although the composer does not provide any further text in the score to identify those to whom he is paying tribute, later interviews reveal his musical subjects. In the fourth movement, Martino

[62] Other examples of the title used in twentieth-century works for piano include Sir Lennox Berkeley's *3 Impromptus*, Op. 7 (1935) and Roberto Gerhard's *3 Impromptus* (1950).

pays homage to both Schumann and Brahms, and the seventh movement is a tribute to Chopin.[63]

That Martino should offer musical tributes to Schumann, Brahms, and Chopin should not be surprising. In many of his works, Martino has often directly acknowledged his admiration for other composers or musicians. For instance, Martino has written several "musical birthday cards"—a gift that seems to be quite routine among certain schools of composers—for notables including Milton Babbitt, Charles Wuorinen, and Arthur Berger. He has also written a more serious work for piano on occasion of Roger Sessions's 80th birthday, *Impromptu for Roger* (1977). Another example of homage can be found in a piece Martino wrote for the cellist Aldo Parisot entitled *Parisonatina al'Dodecafonia* (1964), wherein the composer used Parisot's name as a recurring motto throughout the piece. Finally, while Martino's *Suite in Old Form* (1982) for piano has no dedicatee, it is modeled after the French suites of Bach and thus pays tribute to the Baroque composer; it comprises six dance movements, all in the same key. While each of these works pays homage to various dedicatees in unique and meaningful ways, the means by which the fourth and seventh movements of the *Fantasies and Impromptus* offer such an honorable tribute is just as endearing, if not more so.

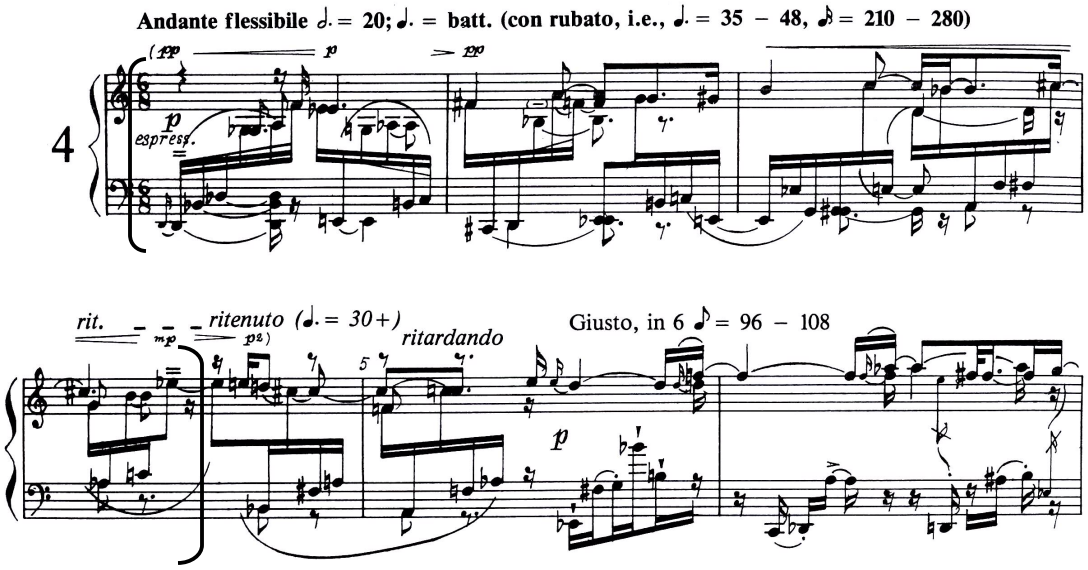
Any attempt to find in these movements either indirect quotations of or allusions to specific works by nineteenth-century composers would be futile. Given the vast differences in harmonic language alone, one would be hard-pressed to discover any clear associations between the twelve-tone writing of Martino and the more tonal, yet

[63] Boros, 244.

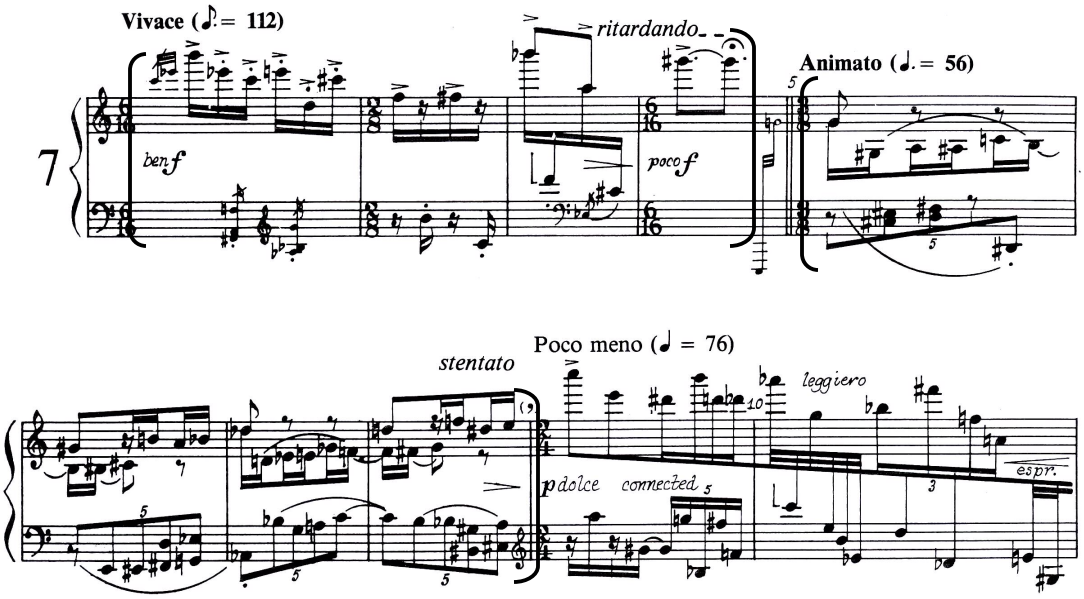
chromatic, writing of his predecessors. Martino's purpose is not to quote their works; by creating a certain atmosphere, however, he is able to present his unique impression of them. In other words, Martino seems to be paying tribute to these composers not by *what* he says, but by *how* he says it.

These two impromptus, numbers four and seven, differ from the others in several ways. First, the phrase structure is more regular. Phrases in these impromptus often fall nicely into groupings of two or four measures, whereas in the other movements they are not as easily identifiable. For example, the phrases in examples 2.6a and 2.6b are delineated by pauses, fermatas, breath marks, and *ritardando* indications.

Example 2.6a. #4 Impromptu, mm. 1-6. Regular phrase structure.

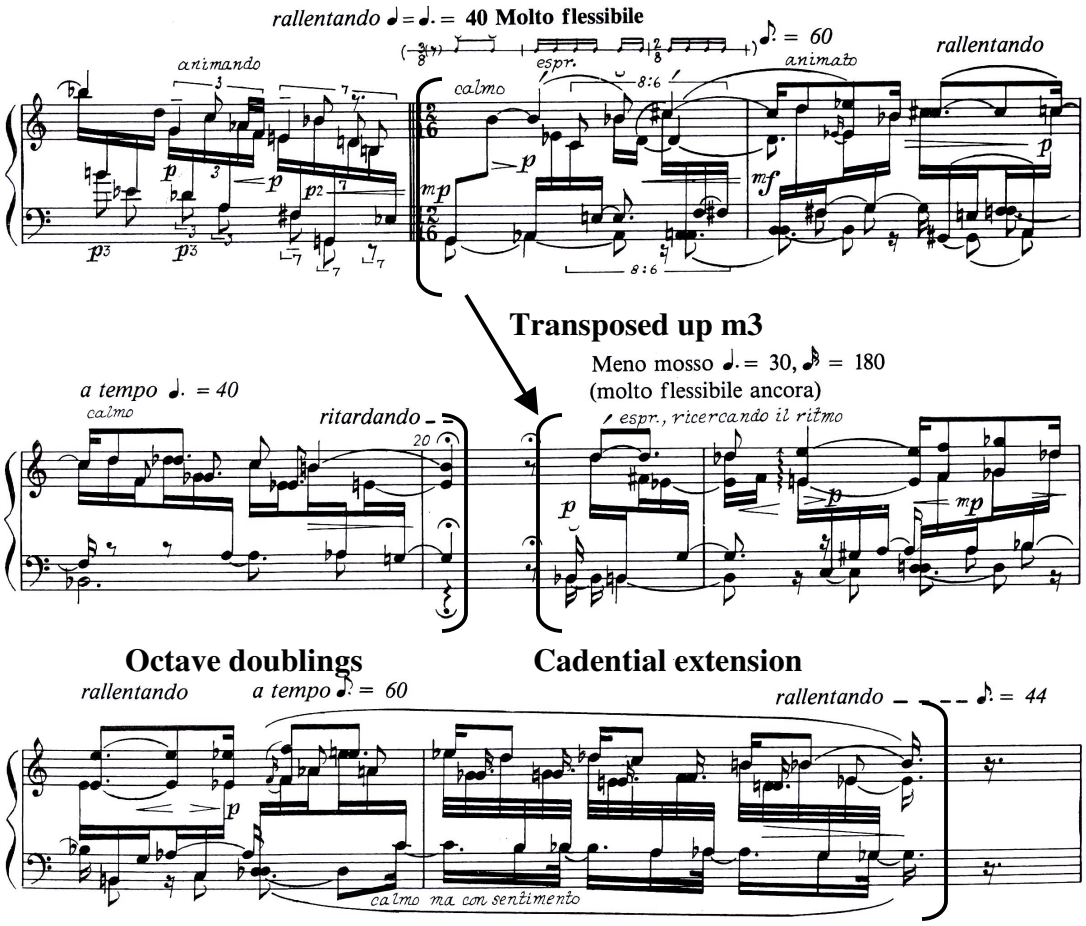


Example 2.6b. #7 Impromptu, mm. 1-10. Regular phrase structure.



Second, on a larger structural level, these movements have a high degree of internal unity. In the fourth movement, the opening phrase is actually "recapitulated" in the final section; in the seventh movement, a single motivic idea serves as the basis for the entire impromptu. Another element contributing to this unity is the use of repetition and sequence. The similarities between the two phrases in example 2.7 are striking: the second phrase is an exact transposition of the first phrase up a minor third. The second phrase also features some octave doublings and a cadential extension.

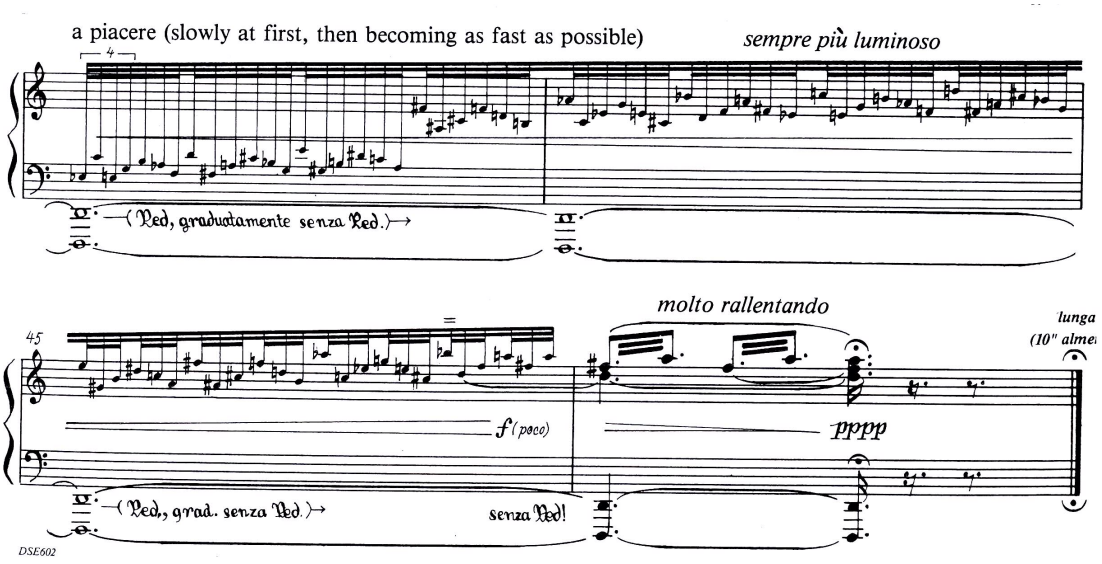
Example 2.7. #4 Impromptu, mm. 16-23. Use of repetition, sequence.



Third, the twelve-tone approach in the fourth and seventh movements is not as strict as it is in the other movements. Certain pitches or their octave equivalents are often repeated. In addition, Martino structures his twelve-tone rows so that certain consonant intervals, such as thirds and sixths, are emphasized more often than the dissonant intervals. (Notice the abundant use of thirds and sixths in example 2.7 above). As a result, a more tonal sound quality is achieved. The most persuasive example of the

composer's increasing reference to tonality can be found in the final cadenza of the fourth movement, which concludes with a D major triad (example 2.8).

Example 2.8. #4 Impromptu, mm. 43-46. Conclusion of movement in D major.



There are other aspects of the fourth impromptu that can be linked more specifically to the music of Schumann and Brahms. For example, the character of this movement is very rhapsodic, even more so than the other movements, as it weaves in and out of tempo. The following diagram illustrates the various fluctuations in tempo that the composer asks for in two particular passages (mm. 1-8; mm. 17-23) of this movement.

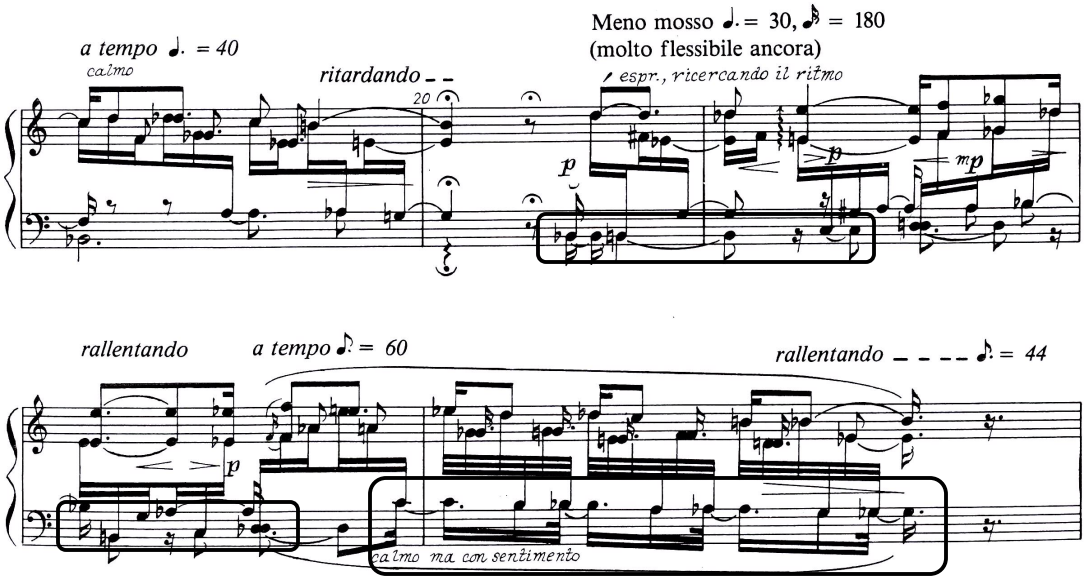
Measure number	Indication
1	*Andante flessibile (con rubato)*
4	*rit. - - - ritenuto*
5	*ritardando; Giusto, in 6*
7	*animando*
8	*calmo; ritenuto*
17	*Molto flessibile, calmo*
18	*animato; rallentando*
19	*a tempo, calmo; ritardando*
20	*Meno mosso (molto flessibile ancora)*
22	*rallentando; a tempo*
23	*rallentando*

Such a flexibility of tempo is found in several works by Schumann, one example being the first movement of the *Fantasy in C major*, Op. 17.

Also particularly reminiscent of Schumann is the chromatic bass line, rising and falling by half steps (example 2.9).[64]

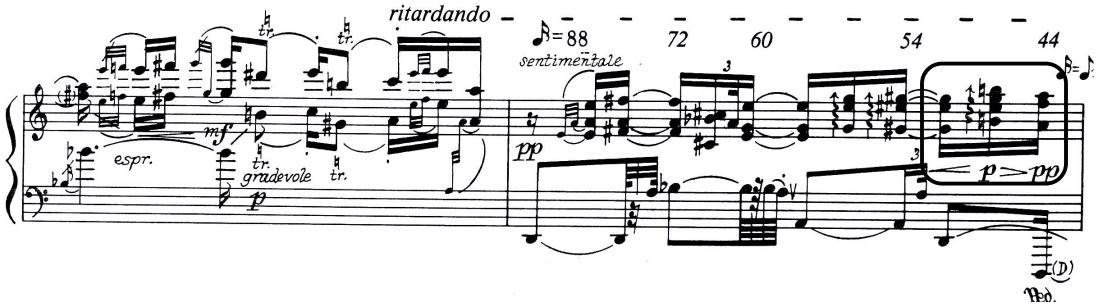
[64] Although it is understood that such chromaticism is not limited to one composer of the nineteenth century but is symptomatic of romanticism in general, the association with Schumann in this case can be accepted based upon Martino's own comments.

Example 2.9. #4 Impromptu, mm. 19-23. Chromatic bass line.

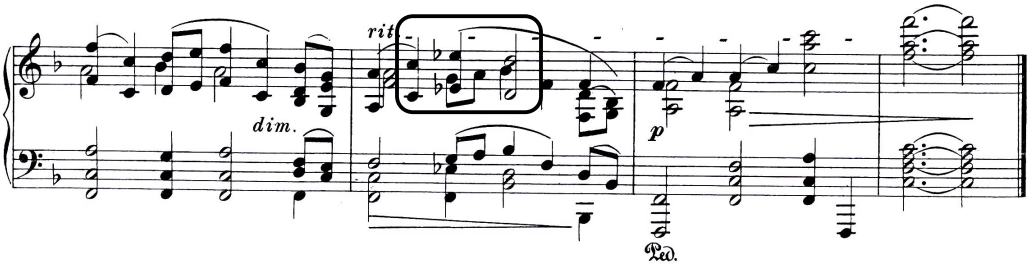


Finally, the appoggiatura-like figure preceding the final cadenza (example 2.10a) provides a more direct link, as it strongly resembles the writing of Brahms, particularly the conclusion of his *Romanze*, Op. 118, No. 5 (example 2.10b). The similar downward resolution of these figures within a chordal texture at or near the final cadence, as indicated in examples 2.10a and 2.10b, is perhaps more recognizable aurally than visually.

Example2.10a . #4 Impromptu, mm. 41-42. Appoggiatura-like cadential figure.



Example2.10 b. Brahms' *Romanze*, Op. 118, No. 5, mm. 54-57.



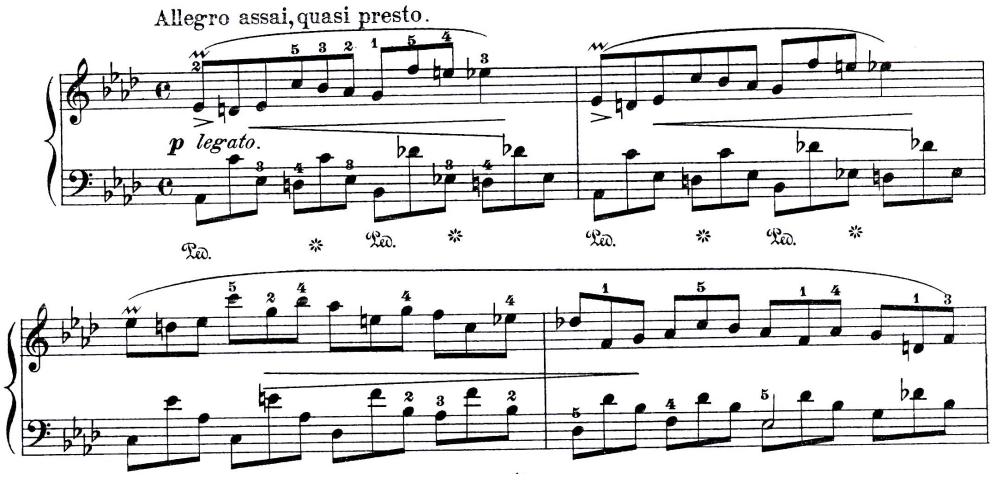
While the bass line featured much of the chromaticism found in the fourth movement, the right hand contains much of the chromatic writing in the seventh movement (the homage to Chopin). Beginning in m. 5, Martino is clearly articulating the half-step hexachord {012345} in the right hand of each bar with only slight reorderings.

m. 5 = G G# A A# B C **m. 6 = G# A Bb B B# C#**

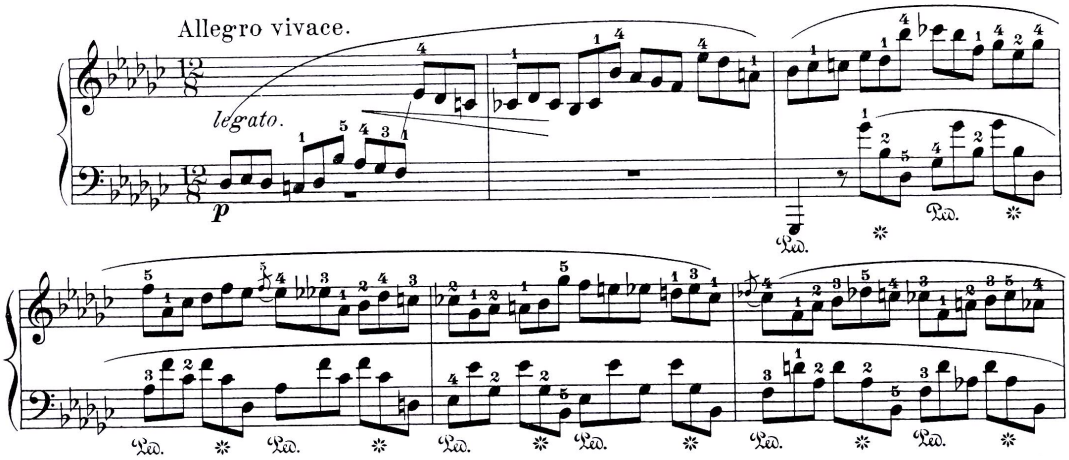
m. 7 = Db D Eb E F Gb **m. 8 = D D# E F F# G**

Also, the ever-challenging cross-rhythms, which feature 6 against 5, 6 against 7, 6 against 8, and 6 against 9, are written in a very contrapuntal texture and make a reference to the more animated writing of Chopin. The two Chopin excerpts in examples 2.11a and 2.11b (both impromptus, incidentally) share many of these characteristics with Martino's Impromptu #7 (example 2.11c), particularly with regard to the two-voice texture and abundant chromaticism.

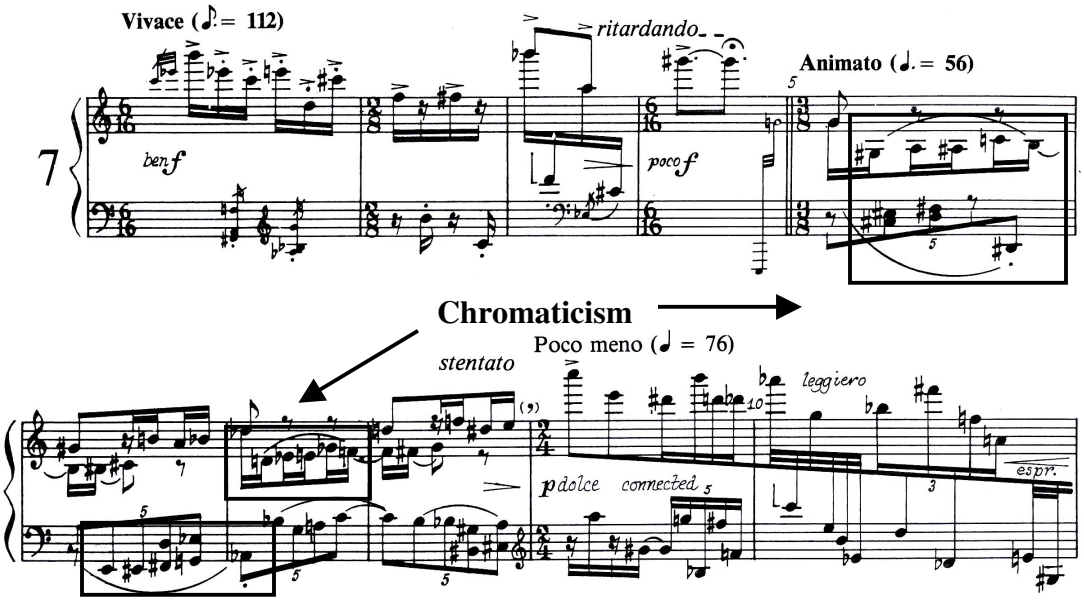
Example 2.11a. Chopin's Impromptu #1, Op. 29, mm. 1-4.

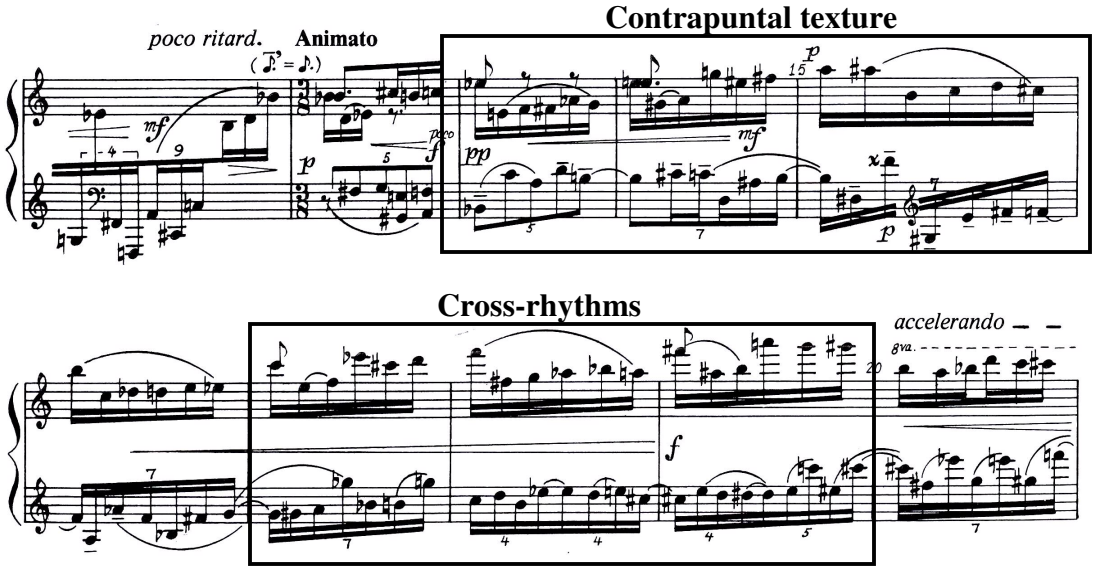


Example 2.11b. Chopin's Impromptu #3, Op. 51, mm. 1-6.



Example 2.11c. Martino's #7 Impromptu, mm. 1-20.





Martino imbues each movement of the *Fantasies and Impromptus* with such key elements of romanticism as virtuosic writing, precise notation for expressive purposes, and long melodic lines. The two "*Omaggio*" impromptus also contain more explicit references to the piano works of Brahms, Chopin, and Schumann, including the use of abundant chromaticism, the consistency of a tempo rubato, regularity of phrase structure, and the predilection for consonance over dissonance. These elements keep the work from becoming merely a compositional exercise that formalizes twelve-tone rows into traditional structures. Martino chooses to integrate the expressive components that were so prevalent in the music of the nineteenth century, and in so doing, enhances the expressive qualities of his own work, which engages both the intellectual mind and the emotional spirit.

Chapter 3

20th-century Pitch Organization in the *Fantasies and Impromptus*

Although many composers have utilized the twelve-tone system as part of their musical language to some extent, very few have done so for as long a period of time and as single-mindedly as Donald Martino. The composer himself appears to acknowledge his unusual focus: "I've always tended to work more in a vacuum . . . than a lot of people," he admits.[65] Some composers have turned to the twelve-tone system late in their careers, after already having established themselves, such as Copland, Stravinsky, and Sessions. Others, such as George Rochberg, started out working with serial techniques but later abandoned the approach in favor of a more "tonal" method. Strict serialism seemed to have run its course and soon enough fell out of favor among late twentieth-century composers. As composer and author John Struble explains in his survey of American classical music,

> Almost all of the composers born after 1932 . . . have abandoned serialism, as well as the early 20th-century modernism pioneered by Stravinsky and Bartók. While they still acknowledge their debt to their comprehensive study of these earlier styles, they are also clearly attempting to strike out in a different, neo-tonal direction. Whether or not their different solutions to this problem will coalesce into a coherent style-period remains to be seen.[66]

Martino—who, incidentally, was born in 1931—stands in stark contrast to his contemporaries in that he has consistently worked with the twelve-tone system, even when doing so left him out of step with the times. It is generally accepted that the

[65] Martino, interview with Plush, 61.
[66] John Warthen Struble, *The History of American Classical Music* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 319.

serialist movement had faded by the 1970's as many composers began to follow Rochberg's lead and embrace the "post-modernistic" return to tonality, yet Martino's *Fantasies and Impromptus* appeared in 1981, at a time when twelve-tone serialism as a whole was neglected. The significance of this work lies not only in its use of traditional structures and references to romanticism, but also in its unique exploitation of the possibilities allowed by the twelve-tone system. The following discussion will focus on the composer's specific harmonic approach in the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, citing examples from the remaining movements (#2, 3, 6, 8) to illustrate his methodology regarding successive row presentation, hexachordal combinatoriality, and motivic continuity between certain movements.

A twelve-tone row is defined not by the pitches it contains, but by the relationships between those pitches. These relationships, or intervals, can be arranged and manipulated by the composer in various ways. When the composer wants to put the intervallic content of certain rows at the foreground, he will often present each row successively, so that the relationships are clearly heard. Within this type of presentation, the rows are frequently presented in either a linear or vertical context. For example, in the second movement of the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, the texture is exclusively linear, and the succession of rows is not difficult to map out (example 3.1). As seen in figure 3.1, the first two rows presented consist of 6-2 hexachords {012346} exclusively. The

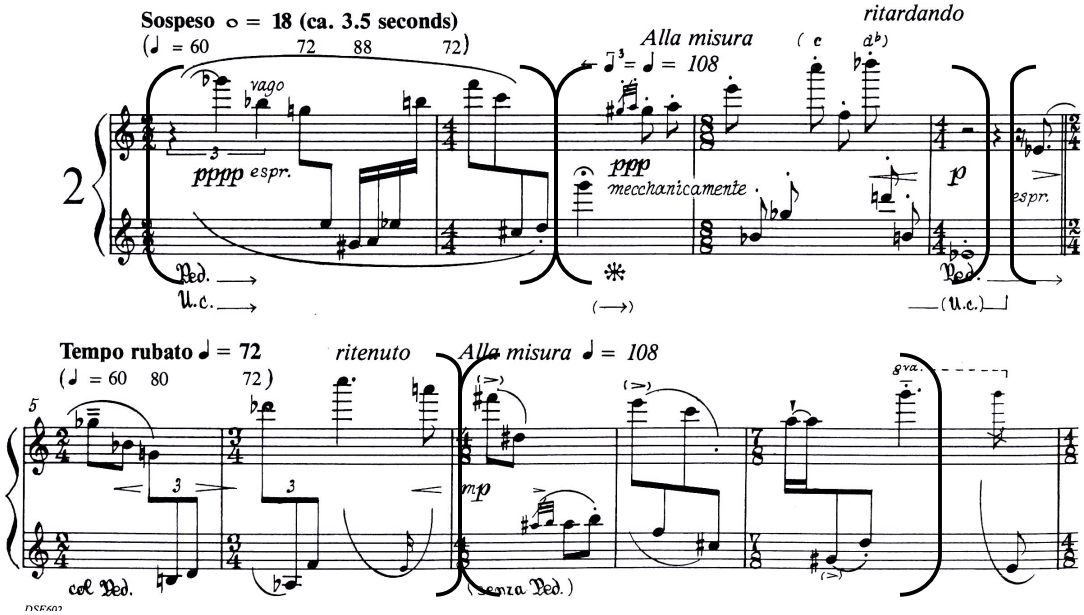
third row consists of two 6-20 hexachords {014589}, while the fourth row comprises two complementary hexachords, 6-Z38 {012378} and 6-Z6 {012567}.[67]

Figure 3.1. Hexachords used in Impromptu #2, mm. 1-9.

1st row:	**Gb Bb G E G# A // Eb B F C C# D**	
	{012346}	**{012346}**
2nd row:	**G G# A E Bb Gb // C F Db D B Eb**	
	{012346}	**{012346}**
3rd row:	**Eb Gb Bb G B D // Db Ab F C E A**	
	{014589}	**{014589}**
4th row:	**F# D# A# B E F // C C# A G# D G**	
	{012378}	**{012567}**

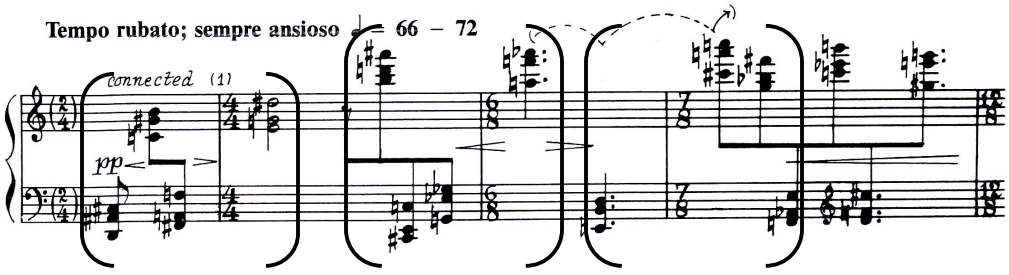
[67] Hexachords with different set class names are complementary if they share an identical interval vector. In this case, set classes 6-Z38 and 6-Z6 both have an interval vector of 421242 (i.e., within each hexachord can be found 4 minor 2nds, 2 major 2nds, 1 minor 3rd, etc.) and are therefore complementary.

Example 3.1. #2 Impromptu, mm. 1-9.



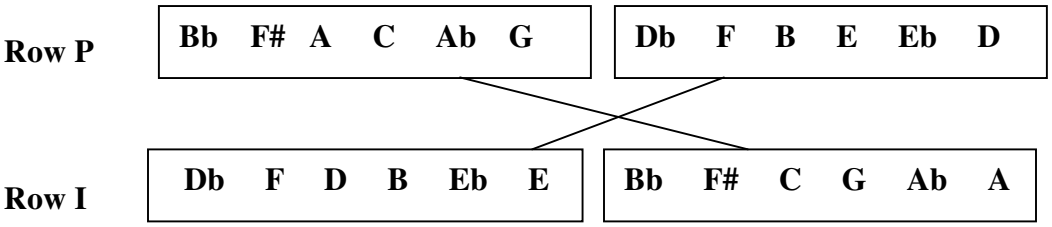
In contrast, the sixth movement, another short impromptu, is almost entirely vertical, or harmonic, in its presentation. Here (example 3.2) the divisions from one row to the next are apparent, yet the trichordal texture obscures the internal orderings of the row.

Example 3.2. #6 Impromptu, mm. 0-3.



When the composer wants to expand the texture by using more than one row at a time, he often takes advantage of the principle of combinatoriality, particularly as it applies to hexachords. A concept discussed earlier, combinatoriality is an important feature of serialism as practiced by Schoenberg and Babbitt, two highly influential figures in Martino's compositional development. A more specific example of this principle is as follows: when a given row (Row P, which is actually the prime row of the first movement) is compared with a certain one of its inversions (Row I), the first six notes of Row P will not be included in the first six notes of Row I, and vice versa.

Figure 3.2. Combinatoriality of Rows P and I.



Thus, these two rows are combinatorial; the complementary hexachords can be combined to form a secondary row, or an "aggregate." Such an approach allows for many more options within the system—the composer is not restricted to following a set of rules for maintaining the "integrity" or the original internal ordering of the row. As a result, the intervallic content of the individual rows goes to the background and the larger relationships between the rows are emphasized instead.

Martino has used several techniques allowed by the rules of combinatoriality, two of which include insertions and simultaneities.[68] The technique of row insertion involves one row literally being "inserted" into another, creating two secondary "aggregates." In figure 3.3 (taken from mm. 12-16 of the first movement), two separate rows can be seen (a). If the first row is split down the middle (b), and the second row is inserted into that spot (c), the result gives a new ordering and two secondary aggregates (d). These rows are hexachordally combinatorial.

Figure 3.3. Row insertion.

a) two separate rows

Row 1	**G B G# A F Bb E C F# C# D Eb**
Row 2	**E C Eb D F# C# G B F Bb A G#**

b) splitting of row 1

Row 1	**G B G# A F Bb**	⟷	**E C F# C# D Eb**

c) insertion of row 2

Row 1	**G B G# A F Bb**		**E C F# C# D Eb**
		↑	
Row 2		**E C Eb D F# C# G B F Bb A G#**	

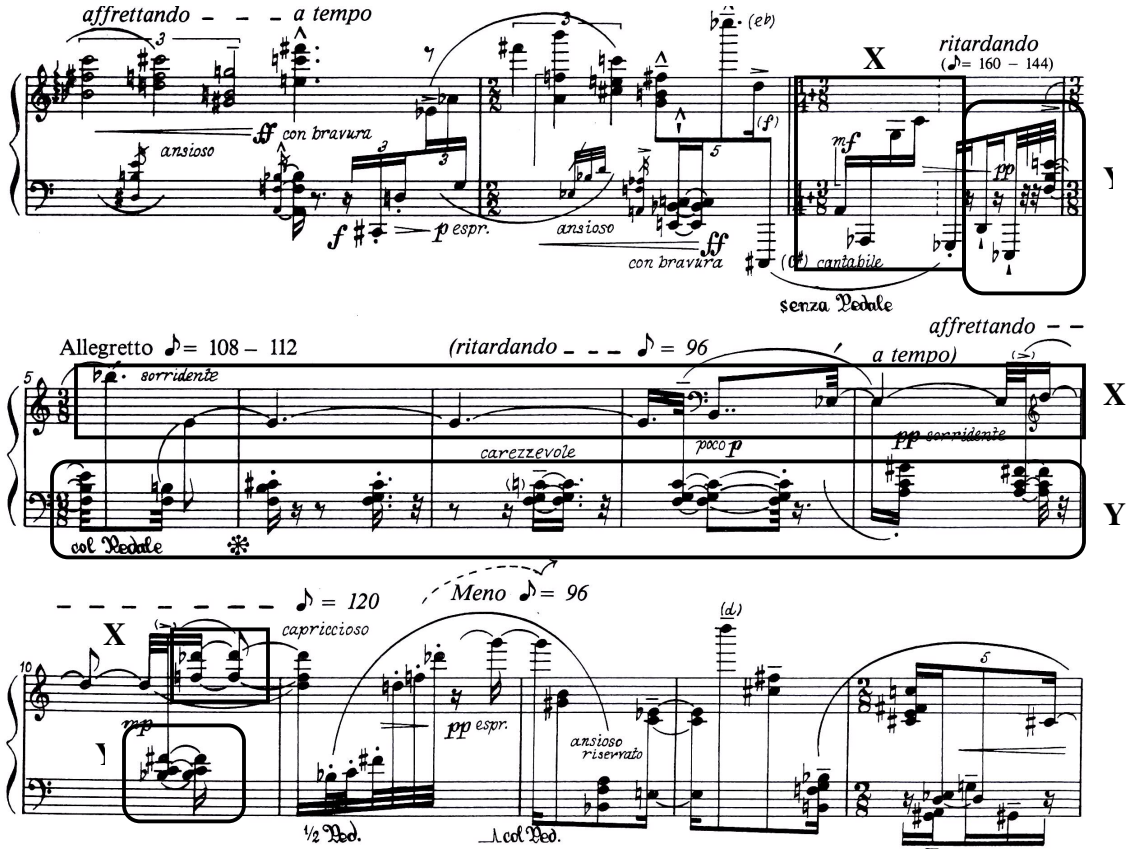
[68] Littleton, 17-18.

d) formation of two secondary aggregates

Aggregate 1	**G**	**B**	**G#**	**A**	**F**	**Bb**	**E**	**C**	**Eb**	**D**	**F#**	**C#**
Aggregate 2	**G**	**B**	**F**	**Bb**	**A**	**G#**	**E**	**C**	**F#**	**C#**	**D**	**Eb**

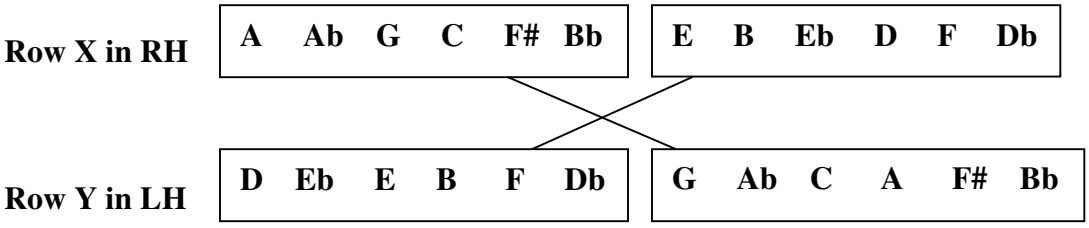
In the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, two different rows are often presented simultaneously, frequently played by different hands. For instance, in the first movement (mm. 4-10), Row X is played primarily by the right hand, while Row Y is articulated in the left hand (example 3.3).

Example 3.3. #1 Fantasy, mm. 2-10. Simultaneous rows.



These rows are differentiated by register and texture: the left-hand row is primarily located in the middle register and is presented chordally, with several pitches repeated; the right hand moves both above and below these left-hand chords with a single line melodic texture. If this passage is analyzed apart from the notation, it is obvious that these rows are combinatorial as well. At any given point during a measure, you are hearing fragments of these aggregates between the two hands.

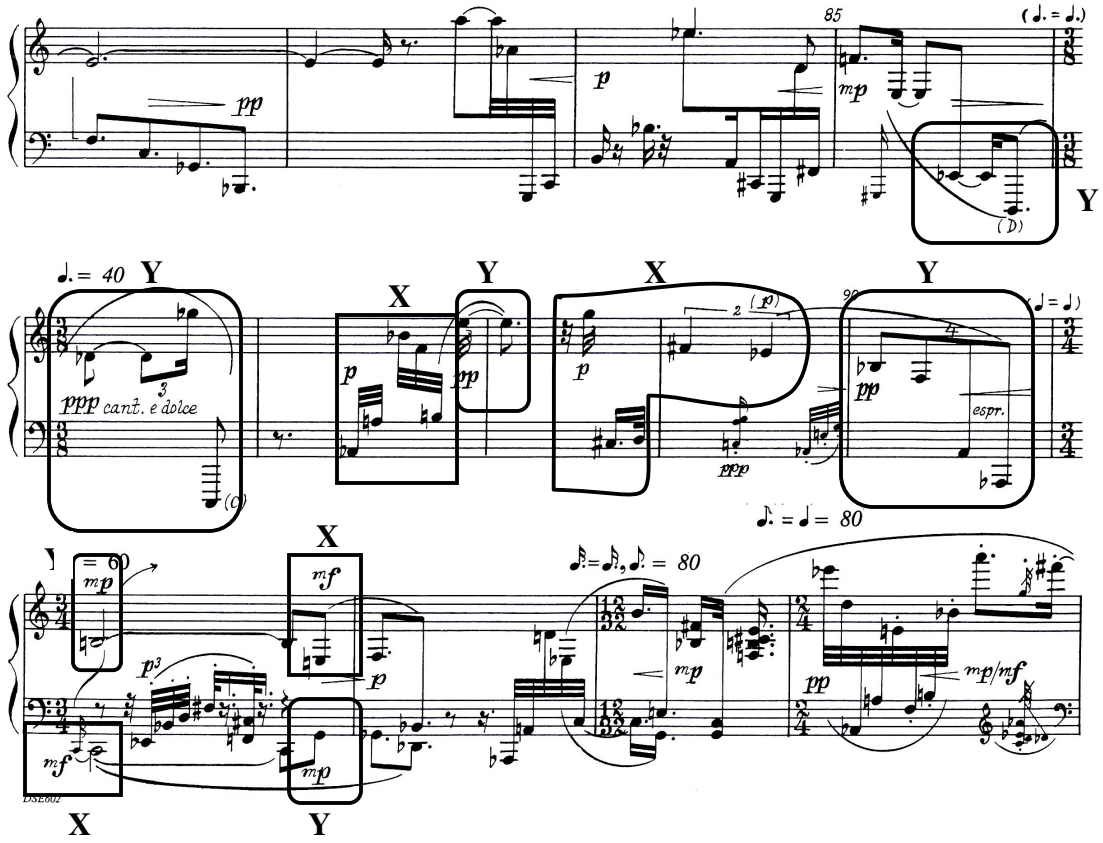
Figure 3.4. Illustration of above simultaneities.



While Martino often uses register to differentiate between certain sets that are presented in close proximity or simultaneously (as in example 3.3), he also uses dynamics and articulation as well.[69] In the following example (example 3.4), fragments of two separate rows keep interrupting each other; the fragments are noticeably set apart by the frequent dynamic changes. All of the fragments marked "X" belong to the same row and are marked either *piano* or *mezzo forte*. All of the fragments marked "Y" belong to another row and are marked consistently softer than the first row – either *pianissimo*, *pianississimo*, or *mezzo piano*.

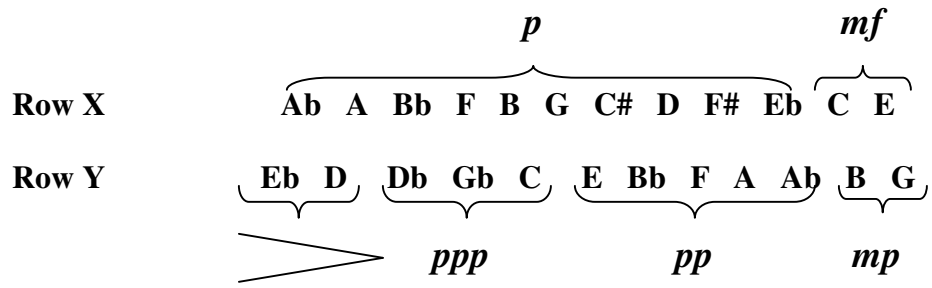
[69] Ibid., 22.

Example 3.4. #1 Fantasy, mm. 82-94. Dynamic indications of rows.



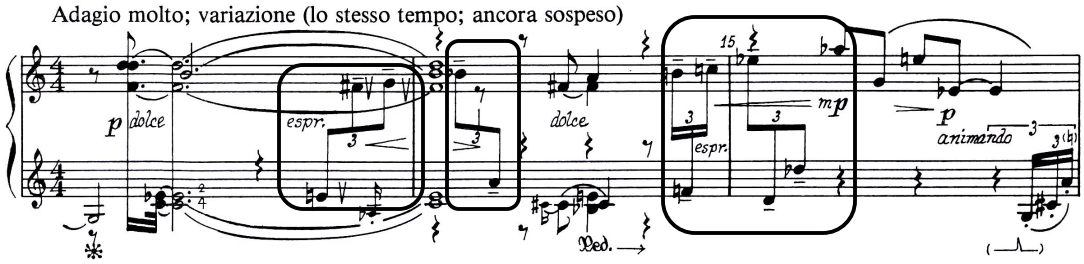
The additional notes in the middle of this passage function separately from these two rows and are not included in this analysis. The two rows discussed above are also presented apart from the score in figure 3.5. The first row is marked either *piano* or *mezzo forte*, while the second row (after a decrescendo) is marked consistently softer.

Figure 3.5. Illustration of above dynamic indications.



Martino also differentiates his rows through articulation. In example 3.5, the rows can be identified as collections of twelve consecutive pitches, yet fragments of those rows can also be extracted according to their articulation markings to form a secondary aggregate. The pitches with tenuto markings along with the final A-flat marked *mezzo piano* form one aggregate, while the remaining notes form another.

Example 3.5. #5 Fantasy, mm. 13-15. Rows indicated by articulation markings.



Aggregate formed by tenuto markings

E F# G Bb A B F C Eb D Db Ab

Remaining notes

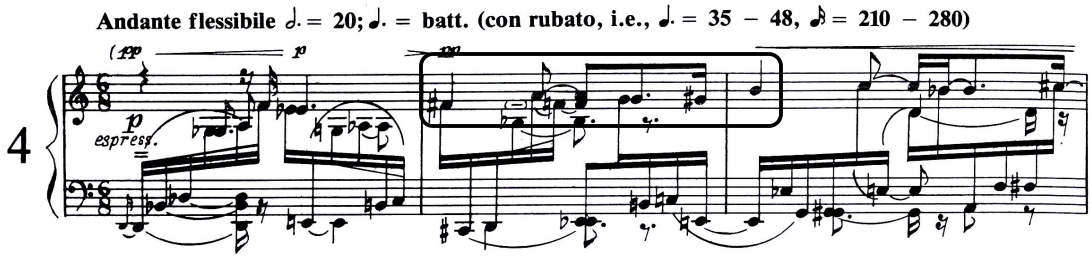
G F D C Eb B Ab C# F# Bb E A

The primary purpose of these and other markings is that of musical expression, but they also serve as indicators of the harmonic organization.

Finally, although the composer gives each movement a unique character and distinctive approach to texture and harmony, he often maintains certain intervallic patterns or fragments of rows from one movement to another. These recurring motives create a sense of unity, yet many of them are rather disguised. The following examples will reveal several of these hidden motivic connections.

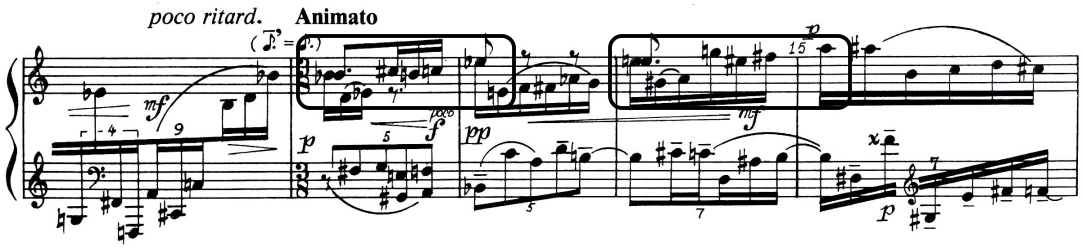
First, a five-note motive that is initially presented in the opening of the fourth movement (example 3.6a) reappears in the seventh movement (example 3.6b) and briefly in the ninth movement (example 3.6c). Although each of the following excerpts places the motive in a different rhythmic context, the pattern remains recognizable due to the sequence of its intervallic content: rising m3, falling M2, rising m2, rising m3.

Example 3.6a. #4 Impromptu, mm. 1-3.



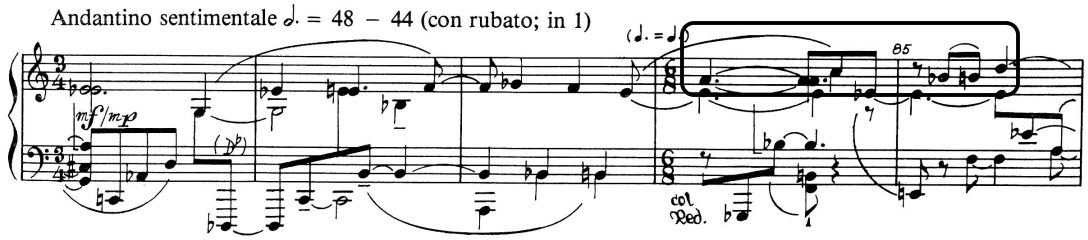
F# A G G# B

Example 3.6b. #7 Impromptu, mm. 11-15.



Bb C# B C Eb E G E# F# A

Example 3.6c. #9 Fantasy, mm. 81-85.

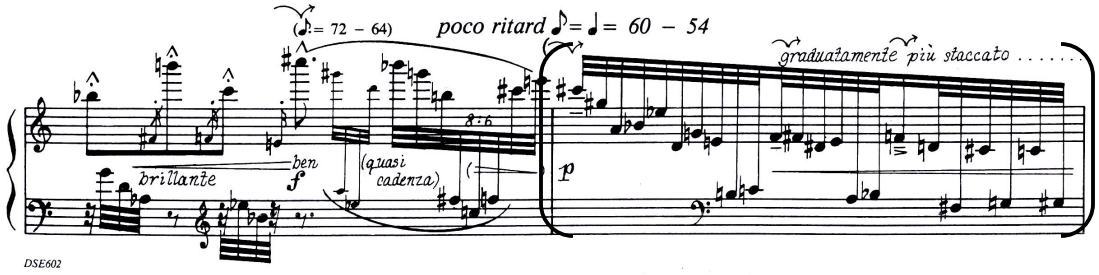


A C Bb B D

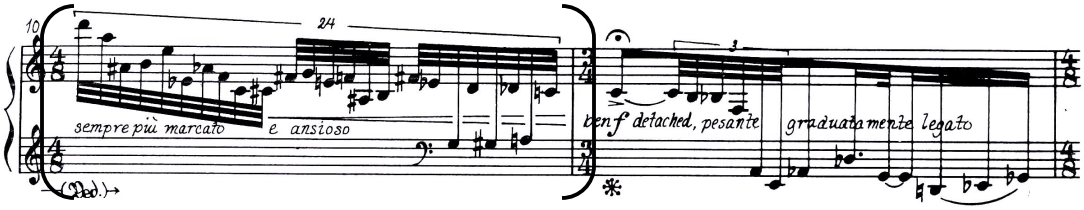
Second, a passage that occurs in the third movement (m. 13, example 3.7a) is then transposed up a half step and appears in the eighth movement (m. 10, example 3.7b). The context of these excerpts is similar, in that both serve as transitions to new sections of their respective movements. The significance of such an audibly apparent echo is debatable, since few similarities exist between these two movements outside of this cadenza-like material. Perhaps the sole purpose of this recurring material is to link the two impromptus. Thus, while the three fantasies stand alone, the following impromptus may be asymmetrically paired together: #2 with #6, due to their obviously contrasting

row presentation (linear vs. vertical); #4 with #7, due to their overt homage to nineteenth-century composers; and #3 with #8, due to the connection illustrated in examples 3.7a and 3.7b.

Example 3.7a. #3 Impromptu, mm. 12-13.



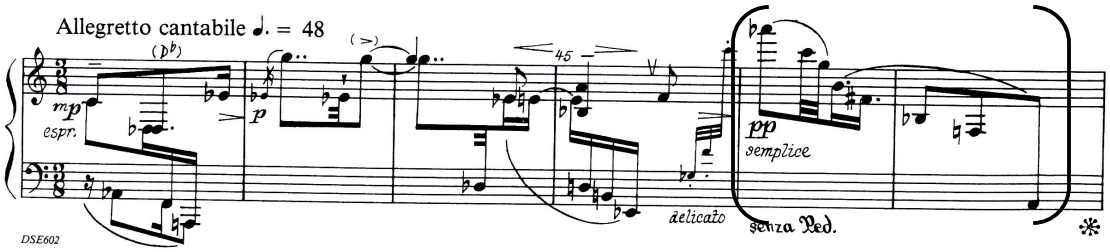
Example 3.7b. #8 Impromptu, mm. 10-11.



Next, a descending passage from the first movement (example 3.8a) appears in the seventh movement (example 3.8b), transposed up a whole step and rhythmically altered. Since the context of each excerpt is drastically different, the intervallic similarities between the two passages are not audibly apparent. However, just as he used the same hexachordal set class (6-2) in varying sections of the first movement to provide a greater sense of structural unity, here Martino has employed the exact (albeit

transposed) collection of intervals (alternating minor sixths and perfect fourths) between two passages in separate movements, thus contributing to the continuity of the work as a whole.

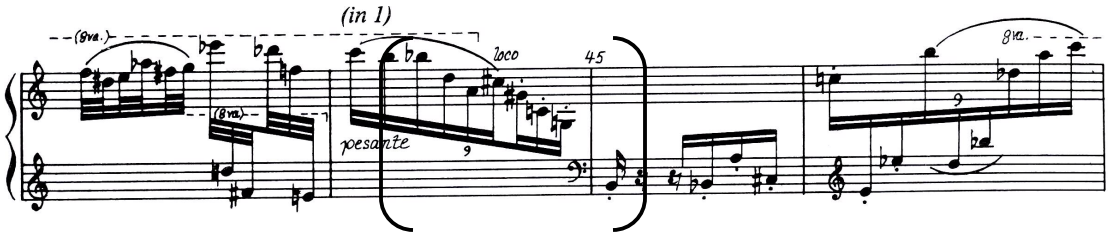
Example 3.8a. #1 Fantasy, mm. 42-47.



Ab C G B F# Bb F A

m6 P4 m6 P4 m6 P4 m6

Example 3.8b. #7 Impromptu, mm. 43-46.



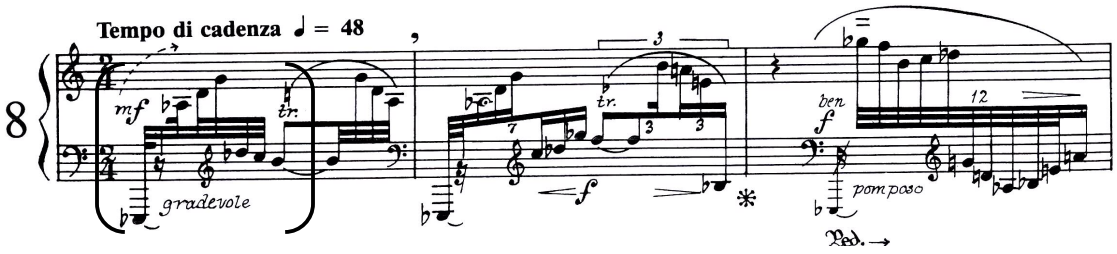
Bb D A C# G# C G B

m6 P4 m6 P4 m6 P4 m6

Finally, a passage from the eighth movement (example 3.9a) recurs in the ninth movement (example 3.9b). Some of the pitches have been reordered and substituted (example 3.9a contains a B, whereas example 3.9b contains an A instead), so the match is not exact, but the similarities of both the pitch collections and the general melodic

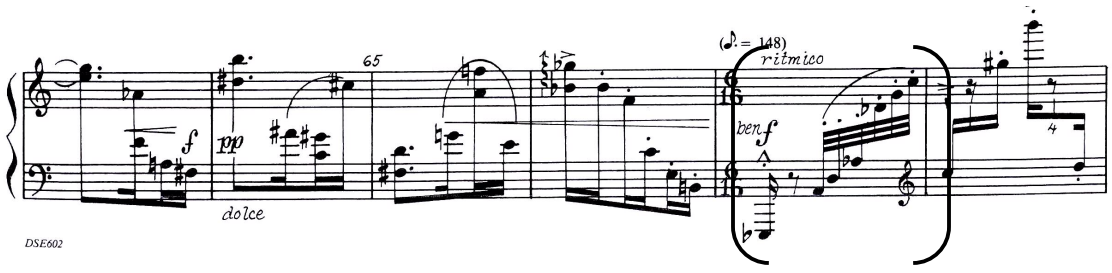
contours are too prominent to be ignored. Aside from the fact that the eighth movement essentially functions as an introduction to the final movement, there seems to be no other connection between the two. Perhaps the recurrence of material in the ninth movement from the fourth (example 3.6a), seventh (example 3.6b), and eighth movements (example 3.9a) renders the former as having a type of recapitulative function—referencing significant landmarks on the journey traveled thus far before bringing the work to its final conclusion.

Example 3.9a. #8 Impromptu, mm. 1-3.



Eb Ab D G Db C B

Example 3.9b. #9 Fantasy, mm. 63-68.



Eb A D Ab Db G C

Any assumption that Martino composed these passages with the explicit intent of drawing specific connections between particular movements would be speculative at best. Also, the appearance of similar melodic patterns throughout the work does not necessarily warrant the assignment of a function to each one; their recurrence is most likely the result of the composer's preference for certain intervallic and/or hexachordal properties. Although many of these elements are not recognized upon first hearing, they are working in the background nevertheless, contributing to the integrated presentation of the entire work.

A comprehensive understanding of Martino's specific harmonic approach is not necessary to appreciate the underlying network of combinatorial hexachords and recurring motives; thus, only a few representative examples have been presented to illustrate the composer's unique manipulation of the twelve-tone system. While the objective of the various motivic connections is debatable, the purpose for which he uses the tools of combinatoriality—joining fragments of preexisting pitch collections to produce a new pitch collection (aggregate formation)—is analogous to his approach to the work as a whole. By merging the separate components of traditional structures, expressive romanticism, and dodecaphony, he has produced a new individualistic style in the *Fantasies and Impromptus*—one that can only be described as distinctly "Martinian."

Conclusion

Donald Martino's compositional approach and musical philosophy were shaped early in his career through his extensive studies with notables such as Milton Babbitt, Roger Sessions, and Luigi Dallapiccola. In addition, it was his exposure to Schoenberg's music while at Princeton that sparked an awareness of the capabilities of the twelve-tone system. Since that time, Martino has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to serial methods throughout his career. Yet because of his interest in past models, he has surrounded his pitch collections with traditional formal structures. Because of his adherence to the aesthetics of romanticism, he has infused those structures with expressive nuances. Although Martino's amalgamative style is very unique and individualistic, the undeniable presence of these traditional structures and elements of romanticism may warrant a more specific classification. Due to his compositional tendencies, Martino's name has often been associated with the trends of postmodernism and the "New Romanticism," despite his adamant opposition to any such connections. Thus, the following discussion briefly revisits the issue of categorization of Martino's works—specifically, his *Fantasies and Impromptus*—and whether the loosely applied labels of "postmodern" and "neo-romantic" are indeed valid descriptions of his music.

Categorization of the *Fantasies and Impromptus*

The task of classifying Martino's work as "postmodern" is made more difficult because the basic features of the trend itself are ambiguous and debatable. As one

scholar has aptly noted, "Postmodern music is not a neat category with rigid boundaries."[70] As a result, scholars, critics, and even composers themselves have disagreed over the appropriate use of the label and have used seemingly contradictory terminology interchangeably. As another scholar has indicated, "Linguistic confusion has reigned whenever postmodernism has been discussed in music."[71] In an attempt to dispel the ambiguities, musicologist Jann Pasler has observed three distinctive approaches of postmodernism with respect to the attitudes they embrace: a postmodernism of reaction, which rejects "the need for constant change and originality and the increasingly difficult and often intellectual approach to music espoused by Modernists"; a postmodernism of resistance, which questions "cultural codes" and explores "any associated social or political affiliations"; and a postmodernism of connection or interpenetration, which results "when a work's juxtapositions involve an eclectic inclusion of material from disparate discourses."[72] Despite these philosophical differences, the following general characteristics of postmodernistic music can be assumed: the resurgence of traditional forms; a return to tonality; the integration of popular idioms; the use of quotation and collage to merge the past with the present; and the inclusion of humor, playfulness, and ironic commentary.

While Martino clearly embraces an intellectual approach, nevertheless his *Fantasies and Impromptus* exhibit traits that might be related to postmodernism. His

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[70] Jonathan D. Kramer, "The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism," *Current Musicology* 66 (2001): 11.
[71] Helga de la Motte-Haber, "Postmodernism in Music: Retrospection as Reassessment," *Contemporary Music Review* 12 (1995): 77.
[72] Jann Pasler, "Postmodernism," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 16 February 2005), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

philosophy most closely resembles the third type of postmodernism, that of connection or interpenetration, in its correlation of various historical, musical, and compositional trends. Musically, this is manifested through the resurgence of traditional forms (sonatina, variations, rondo) in the three fantasies, as discussed in Chapter 1. And although there is no true return to tonality, there are hints of it, particularly in the fourth impromptu (the homage to Schumann and Brahms). Also, while certain similarities can be found between the fourth and seventh movements and particular works of Brahms and Chopin (as discussed in Chapter 2), Martino avoids the use of direct quotation. Moreover, he chooses not to integrate popular idioms or any outright humorous, playful, or ironic material in this work.

The primary argument for associating the *Fantasies and Impromptus* with postmodernism lies with the work's use of traditional structures, yet the fulfillment of one criterion alone is not quite compelling enough to assume such a conclusion. Also, because one of the premises of the postmodern movement itself is that of rejecting the intellectual approach, Martino, who at times has been called an "academic serialist," cannot be considered a truly postmodern composer. Although his music clearly exhibits several aspects of postmodernism, any similarities between the trend and Martino's works must be deemed coincidental at best.

Many characteristics of the "New Romanticism" (or neo-romanticism ~~the~~ terms are often used interchangeably) are quite similar to those of postmodernism, for neo-romanticism has often been considered to be "synonymous with neo-conservative post-

modernism."[73] However, the premises of the two trends appear to be slightly different. If the postmodernism of reaction, for instance, returns to compositional devices of the past primarily in response to recent trends, then neo-romanticism embraces such ideals solely for their own sake. General characteristics of neo-romantic music include the following: a high degree of virtuosity, a return to emotional expression, a greater sense of tonality, and the use of quotation and collage to incorporate works of the past. The brief hints of tonality and the avoidance of direct quotation in the *Fantasies and Impromptus* were previously discussed in the light of postmodernism. More prevalent both in the *Fantasies and Impromptus* and in Martino's other works as well are the uses of virtuosity and emotional expression (as discussed in Chapter 2).

These salient features of romanticism (elements of virtuosity and emotional expression) are placed in the foreground of Martino's works, and as a result, they are immediately evident upon their hearing. In contrast, the underlying traditional structures are revealed only after a careful investigation of the score. The greater prominence of neo-romantic elements over postmodern ones makes a fairly compelling case for the association of Martino's music with the former trend, yet the composer's own words regarding such an association must have the final say. Martino himself stated that "it's convenient to make such a connection [between his music and the "New Romanticism"], but it's totally incorrect."[74] When combining this statement with the composer's

[73] Jann Pasler, "Neo-romantic," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 16 February 2005), <http://www.grovemusic.com>
[74] Boros, 249.

complete disregard for the trend ("a movement in which I have no interest whatever"), maintaining a "neo-romantic" position becomes very problematic.

The *Fantasies and Impromptus* exhibit fleeting characteristics of both postmodernism and neo-romanticism, yet neither is dominant enough to warrant exclusive categorization. Martino's work remains individualistic in that it embraces the forms of postmodernism and the expressions of neo-romanticism while keeping its intellectual ties to serialism.

Reception of the *Fantasies and Impromptus*

As a result of this unique integration, the *Fantasies and Impromptus*, as well as Martino's other works, have received mixed reviews. Some admirers appreciate the intricate details that contribute to the music's expressivity, while the critics dismiss the disjunct lines and constantly changing dynamics as foreign and unpleasant. Martino's supporters laud him for his individuality. David Nicholls calls Martino "a figure to be praised and cherished" for his "willingness to combine intellectualism with passion, and to imbue his work with deeply personal (yet often universal) resonances."[75] Renowned saxophonist Kenneth Radnofsky is quoted as calling Martino "a man of uncompromising artistic integrity…he was Brahms, working in a modern idiom."[76] David Burge describes the composer's music as "interesting, beautiful, vital, sensitive, individualistic music" and labels the *Fantasies and Impromptus* in particular as "a superbly expressive work."[77]

[75] Nicholls, 79.
[76] Richard Dyer, "Donald Martino, 74, Pulitzer-Winning Composer, Teacher at Local Colleges," *The Boston Globe*, 13 December 2005.
[77] David Burge, "Contemporary Piano: Notating Emotion," *Keyboard* 8, no. 7 (July 1982): 63.

Anthony Tommasini of *The New York Times* describes the work as "a 20th-century descendant of Schumann's fantastical *Kreisleriana*," while Andrew Porter of *The New Yorker*, as quoted by Tommasini, calls the work a "landmark of American piano music."[78] To these critics, Martino's unique methodology has only served to increase the appreciable value of the music.

Yet not all have such high praise for the composer and his individualistic approach. In the following excerpt from a 1996 article in *The New York Times* entitled "How Talented Composers Become Useless," Richard Taruskin ridicules Martino's piano music for its supposed failure to reconcile the disparate stylistic characteristics discussed in the previous three chapters.

> That is the problem with Mr. Martino's piano music, which strives for conventional expressivity while trying to maintain all the privileged and prestigious truth claims of academic modernism. Because there is no structural connection between the expressive gestures and the 12-tone harmonic language, the gestures are not supported by the musical content (the way they are in Schumann, for example, music Mr. Martino professes to admire and emulate). And while the persistent academic claim is that music like Mr. Martino's is too complex and advanced for lay listeners to comprehend, in fact the expressive gestures, unsupported by the music's syntax or semantics, are primitive and simplistic in the extreme… The combination of gross expressive gestures for the layman and arcane pitch relationships for the math professors is a perpetual contradiction. It fatally undermines the esthetic integrity of the music.[79]

First, Taruskin claims that the expressive gestures in Martino's music are "gross" and "primitive," as if they were inserted carelessly, excessively, and with regard for effect only. Regardless of how meticulous Martino's expressive markings may be, however,

[78] Anthony Tommasini, "Donald Martino, 74, Creator of Atonal Musical Works," *The New York Times*, 12 December 2005.
[79] Richard Taruskin, "How Talented Composers Become Useless," *The New York Times*, 10 March 1996.

they are not in fact overbearing, nor are they intended to create a manufactured performance. Within the general parameters of the composer's notation, the performer is still allowed a great deal of expressive and interpretative freedom in Martino's works, as discussed in Chapter 2. Second, and more importantly, the core of Taruskin's argument rests on the assumption that "there is no structural connection between the expressive gestures and the 12-tone harmonic language." However, as discussed in Chapter 1, Martino unmistakably uses traditional structures—although they may not be immediately apparent—in the*Fantasies and Impromptus* to provide an underlying connection between the expressive gestures and the harmonic language. Such a connection is established through their mutually dependent relationship: the expressive markings and the pitch collections serve to demarcate the formal structures more clearly, while the formal structures provide greater stability and a means of systematic control for the intricate labyrinth of expressive gestures and twelve-tone designs. As a result, the aesthetic integrity of the music can only be strengthened.

There will always be differing opinions regarding Martino's music, as well as twelve-tone music in general. Regardless of one's perspective, however, Martino's unique achievements as a composer and his steadfast individuality are undeniable. Although many composers have utilized the twelve-tone system as part of their musical language to some extent, very few have done so for as long a period of time and in such drastic seclusion from other influences as Donald Martino. The fact that he composed the *Fantasies and Impromptus* in 1981, at a time when twelve-tone music was out of vogue, testifies to his individuality as a composer. Within these pieces, he demonstrates

his affinity for combining improvisation with structure, virtuosity with expression, and tradition with innovation. By fusing together traditional formal structures with elements of romanticism, his unique twelve-tone language takes on a new meaning and becomes more comprehensible. Thus, these pieces are not limited to one particular style, but they are an embodiment of several approaches, an aggregate of multiple layers. Despite Martino's claim that he has not "been that innovative," the fact that he has indeed successfully united disparate stylistic approaches proves otherwise. Thus, he has been quite innovative after all.

Appendix A

Chronology of Donald Martino's career

1931	born May 16 – Plainfield, NJ
1948-52	Syracuse University (B.M.), studied with Bacon
	Served on Army Reserves, 98th Division Army Band
1952-54	Princeton University (MFA), studied with Sessions & Babbitt
1954-56	Studied with Dallapiccola in Florence
1956-57	Taught theory and woodwinds at Third St. Settlement School (NY)
1957-59	Instructor of music, Princeton University
1959-66	Assistant Professor, Yale University
1965-69 (summers)	Teacher of composition, Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood)
1966-69	Associate Professor, Yale University
1969-81	Chair of composition dept, New England Conservatory
1971	Visiting Lecturer, Harvard University
1973	Composer in residence, Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood)
1978	Founded publishing company Dantalian, Inc.
1980-83	Irving Fine Professor of Music, Brandeis University
1983-89	Professor of Music, Harvard University
1989-92	Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music, Harvard University
2005	died December 8 – en route to Antigua

Memberships

American Academy of Arts and Sciences
National Institute of Arts and Letters
College Music Society
American Composers Alliance
American Music Center
International Society for Contemporary Music
American Society of Composers
International Clarinet Society
Broadcast Music, Inc.

Awards

1952, 1953	BMI Student Composer awards
1953-54	Bonsall Fellowship
1953-54	Kosciuszko scholar
1953	National Federation of Music Clubs award
1954-55	Kate Neal Kinley fellowship, University of Illinois
1954-55	Fulbright grant, Florence
1955-56	Fulbright grant, Florence
1961	Pacifica Foundation award
1963	Creative Arts Citation, Brandeis University
1965	Morse Academy Fellowship
1967	National Institute of Arts and Letters grant
1967-68	Guggenheim Fellowship
1973-74	Guggenheim Fellowship
1973	National Endowment for the Arts grant
1973	Massachusetts Council on Arts grant
1973	Naumburg Award
1974	Pulitzer Prize for music (*Notturno*)
1976	Classical Critics Citation
1976	National Endowment for the Arts grant
1979	National Endowment for the Arts grant
1979	Mass. Council on Arts grant
1981	American Academy Institute of Arts and Letters membership
1982-83	Guggenheim Fellowship
1982	Mass. Council on Arts grant
1983	Honorary M.A., Harvard University
1985	First prize, Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards for String Quartet (1983)
1987	Mark M. Horbilt award, Boston Symphony Orchestra
1987	American Academy of Arts and Sciences fellowship
1989	National Endowment for the Arts grant

Appendix B

Works by Donald Martino, listed in chronological order by genre

Orchestral:

- Sinfonia (1953) – withdrawn, unpublished
- Contemplations (1956)
- Piano Concerto (1965)
- Mosaic for Grand Orchestra (1967)
- Cello Concerto (1972)
- Ritorno (1976), arr. for band (1977)
- Triple concerto for clarinet, bass clarinet, & contrabass clarinet (1977)
- Divertisements for Youth Orchestra (1981)
- Alto Saxophone Concerto (1987)
- Violin Concerto (1996)
- Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra (2004)
- Concerto for Orchestra (2005 – his last completed work)

Chamber:

- String Quartet No. 1 – withdrawn, unpublished
- Sonata for clarinet and piano (1950-51)
- Piano Quartet (1951)
- String Quartet No. 2 (1952)
- Sonata for violin and piano (1952)
- String Quartet No. 3 (1953)
- String Trio (1954)
- Three Dances for viola and piano (1954)
- Sette Canoni Enigmatici: Canons with resolutions (1955)
- Quartet for clarinet and string trio (1957)
- Trio for clarinet, violin, and piano (1959)
- Cinque Frammenti for oboe and doublebass (1961)
- Concerto for wind quintet (1964)
- Notturno (1973)
- String Quartet No. 4 (1983)
- Canzone e tarantella sul nome Petrassi for clarinet and cello (1984)
- From the Other Side for flute, cello, piano, and percussion (1988)
- Three Sad Songs for viola and piano (1993)
- Serenata Concertante [octet] (1999)
- Rhapsody for cello with vibraphone and piano (2003)
- String Quartet No. 5 (2004)
- Sonata No. 2 for violin and piano (2004)

Trio for clarinet, cello, and piano (2004)
Concertino for violin and fourteen instruments (unfinished)

Solo instruments other than piano:

Suite of Variations on Medieval Melodies for cello (1952, rev. 1954)
A Set for clarinet (1954, rev. 1974)
Harmonica Piece (1954)
Quodlibets for flute (1954)
Fantasy-Variations for violin (1962)
Parisonatina al'dodecafonia for cello (1964)
B,A,B,B,IT,T for clarinet with extensions (1966)
Strata for bass clarinet (1966)
Quodlibets II for flute (1979)
Charles: Happy Birthday to You – clarinet in A (1988)
15, 5, 92, A.B. for clarinet (1992)
Variazioni Sopra Un Soggetto Cavato for clarinet (1997)
Piccolo Studio for Alto Saxophone (1999)
Romanza for solo violin (2000)
Soliloquy for vibraphone (2003)
Sonata for solo violin (2003)

Piano solo:

With Little Children in Mind (1951)
Fantasy (1958)
Pianississimo (1970)
Impromptu for Roger (1977)
Fantasies and Impromptus (1981)
Suite in Old Form [Parody Suite] (1982)
Twelve Preludes (1991)

Vocal:

Separate Songs (1951) for high voice and piano:
All day I hear the noise of waters (J. Joyce)
The half-moon westers low, my love (A.E. Housman)
From the Bad Child's Book of Beasts (H. Belloc) for high voice and piano (1952)
Portraits: A Secular Cantata (1955)
[Anyone lived in a pretty how town]
3 Songs (Joyce) for bass/soprano and piano (1955):
Alone, Tutto e sciolto, A Memory of the Players in a Mirror at Midnight
Two Rilke Songs for mezzo soprano and piano (1961):
Die Laute, Aus einem Sturmnacht VIII
Seven Pious Pieces (R. Herrick) for chorus (1971)
Paradiso Choruses (Dante) for solo voices, chorus, orchestra, and tape (1974)
The White Island for SATB and chamber orchestra (1985)

Jazz Ensemble (instrumentation varies):

- After Lennie (1957)
- Canon Ball (1957)
- Cathy (1957)
- Late in the Day (1957)
- Lover, Come Bach (1957)
- Threeway (1957)
- Mac Fugal (1957)

Transcriptions for clarinet and piano:

- Canti di Maghe, Fantasia – P. Musone
- Concertino, Fantasia based on Verdi's opera "Un Ballo in Maschera" – Donato Lovreglio
- Divertimento based on Verdi's opera "La Forza del Destino" – E. Cavallini
- Fantasia based on Donizetti's opera "Poliuto" – Anonymous
- Fantasia based on Verdi's opera "Rigoletto" – Anonymous
- Fantasia based on Verdi's opera "La Traviata" – F. Pontillo
- Sonata in A minor transcribed from the B minor Sonata for Violin and Keyboard – J. S. Bach
- Sonata in F major transcribed from the G major Sonata for Violin and Keyboard – J. S. Bach

Film scores (unpublished):

- The White Rooster (1950)
- The Lonely Crime (1958)

Other works:

- Augenmusik: A Mixed Mediocritique for actress/danseuse/uninhibited female percussionist and tape (1972)
- Many other unpublished popular songs and jazz arrangements
- 178 Chorale Harmonizations of J. S. Bach

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Vita

Jonathan Leonard Ryan Fogg was born September 3, 1978 in Houston, Texas, the son of Robert and Jeanne Fogg. He received a Bachelor of Music degree with distinction from East Texas Baptist University in 2000 and a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from the University of Houston in 2002. He began working toward the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance at The University of Texas at Austin in 2002 and continued his studies there until 2005. He then served as Lecturer in Piano at Northwest Missouri State University before acquiring his current position as Assistant Professor of Music at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee.

Permanent address: 1857 Clover Brook Dr., Jefferson City, TN 37760

This treatise was typed by the author.